

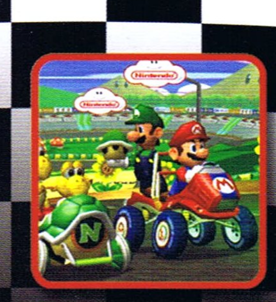
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ISSUE #87
DEC 2003 / £3.50
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BILLY HATCHER
REVIEWED! Sega's best game in years…
EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!
THE SIMPSONS HIT AND RUN
IT'S GTA SPRINGFIELD! WOO-HOO!
TOKYO GAME SHOW FRENZY!
KILLER 7, STARCRAFT: GHOST, RESIDENT EVIL 4… COME ON IN!
THE RETURN OF THE KING
Orc this way for the world's first review – ONLY IN NGC!
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IT WANTS TO BE FOUND...

It's amazing what you can find when you're not really looking. Or can't actually see it. Take **NGC**'s well-stocked wine cellar, for example, where storage chests tend to greet your shins with a sickening crunch in the dark. This month, while hunting for a decent claret, I stumbled into a crate full of memory-jerking **NGC** memorabilia. Launch editor Jonathan Davies' pipe and slippers. Wil Overton's fright wig. James Ashton's… no, it *is* James Ashton (always wondered where Weaver hid 'the evidence'). A Greener-graffitied GBC Pak. A distressing 'adult' sketch of Mario and Joanna Dark… You just can't get hold of this sort of stuff any more. Unless we stick it on eBay.

PAK TO THE FUTURE

It's great to look back on a bit of quality Nintendo magazine history, but it's worth looking ahead as well. Especially when our ranks are about to swell thanks to Nintendo's impressive Gamecube price cut. Who'd have thought Nintendo would start getting aggressive? Not us. If this is your first issue of **NGC**, we're very pleased to meet you. You've made the right choice. Just look at what's coming up this month alone: *The Return of the King, Billy Hatcher, Worms 3D*… and a good *Simpsons* game. We didn't expect *Hit & Run* to be quite so entertaining, we'll admit that. But then there's a lot of things we didn't expect. *That* photo, for instance. Hey, I said to Paul, "Why not make me look like an Orc? Y'know, *Lord of the Rings* an' all that. It'll be *magical*." This is the result. A 10-stone anti-Hulk. About as frightening as mud.

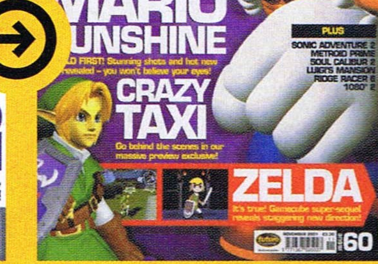
Cheers, Paul…

Orcins*
marcus.hawkins
@futurenet.co.uk

*Yeah, quality Paul. *Reeeal* quality.

TURN TO PAGE 48
For the **NGC** verdict on the biggest movie game ever…

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WHY WE'RE No.1 FOR NINTENDO

NGC's the result of over a decade of gaming genius – so you're the best-informed Nintendo gamer around.



■ In the beginning… there was Super Play. Dedicated to the SNES, it changed videogame magazines forever.

■ As the N64 became the choice of real game fans, Super Play made way for the mighty N64 Magazine.

■ From issue 60, N64 transformed into **NGC** – the ultimate hit for true Nintendo fans!



MEET ENJiKi

*Enjiki is **NGC**'s mascot, employed to introduce various sections of the magazine and bring a touch of charm and freshness to the place. What this means is, she pokes her nose into everyone's business and squirts our desks with air freshener occasionally. We would ask her to do more, but the last time anyone told her to pop to the shops for biscuits we ate Bonio for a month. We think it was a genuine mistake.*



XIII
Stealth, shooting and superb comic-book graphics. This is the business.

THE SIMPSONS
Springfield's residents take a tip from *GTA* and drive on the sidewalk.

TOKYO GAME SHOW
Waku waku! Gaze in awe at the delights on display in Japan.

WHAT'S IN NGC?

After something in particular in this packed issue? Here's where you'll find it.

PREVIEWS
Nearly here… but you'll have to wait a tiny bit longer.

NEWS
The stories, the depth, the insider view.

EXTENDED PLAY
Licking the last bit of fun from the gaming lolly stick.

REVIEWS
Who needs money? Exchange it for some of these…



RISING FUN

Western game companies have come up with some world-class games – *Tomb Raider*, *GTA* and their ilk – but when you want true gaming innovation, you have to look to Japan. And that's exactly what we're doing this issue as we take a look at the software unveiled at the Tokyo Game Show…

RESIDENT EVIL 4

Still exclusive to Gamecube, still as unnerving as ever…

Leon S. Kennedy's back in this original new story, although this time he's been infected by the Umbrella virus and has to face a totally new set of fearful visions. In fact, there's not a great deal of gore on show yet – it's seems more of a question of mental torture, with shadowy, ethereal figures moving through closed doors, soulless images of wooden dummies highlighted by the crack of lightning and, hell, even flapping curtains playing tricks on Leon's mind. We're sure there'll be some horrific visions just around the corner waiting to be shot to pieces of hot death. Perhaps, though, it's the effect of the Umbrella virus distorting his senses – but at least it's a treat for ours. The footage seen so far shows the camera zooming dramatically in and out behind Leon when he's running away – or something's approaching him. And the shift of *Resident Evil* into fully-fledged 3D is long overdue…

△ **In the action seen so far, Leon packs a simple pistol and torch. The gun doesn't seem too effective.**

△ **The new 3D environments and dynamic camera enhance the *Resi 4* experience.**

GO GO! TOKYO


△ No... could it be? A zombie shuffling silently by. And Leon doesn't shoot it...


△ The character models are incredibly well defined and detailed. Nice jacket, too.


△ Developers love hair. They get off on making it waft at *every* opportunity.


△ Lightning seems to be your constant companion. That's horror for you.


△ The real-time lighting is exceptional. Hope he's got some spare batteries...


△ What's going on here? Leon's been trapped at the end of a corridor by this rope-hook-wielding freak. Bullets seem to have no effect, so it ends up a battle of brawn. Leon loses out.


△ Whenever the hook-wielding apparition appears, everything takes on a cool blue hue (even fire). This lighting, combined with the sharp camera angles seems to build the tension well.

This autumn's Tokyo Game Show gave everyone a glimpse at how some killer new 'Cube titles are shaping up...

The Tokyo Game Show often provides a high point to the last few months of the videogame industry calendar. This year's didn't disappoint, with some gripping new footage and brand new playable code of some uplifting new games. **NGC**'s soft-drinking, hard-writing reporters flew out to Japan to scour the show floor, poke frightened Japanese PR types in the chest, point at the bloke trussed up in a chicken costume and forced to play *Billy Hatcher* and generally hang around with their collective foot in the door until we came away with what we wanted.

First up, we muscled (okay, politely apologised our way) to the front of the crowd in Capcom's 'zone' to watch the short but captivating **Resident Evil 4** trailer, last seen at this year's E3.

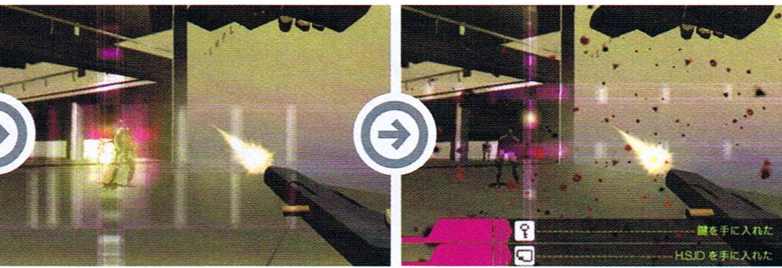
It's the sort of footage you're compelled to watch over and over again. Tightly edited, with a single shot lasting no longer than a couple of seconds, it can be overwhelming on your first sitting. But go through and analyse individual frames and you begin to appreciate just how unsettling this fully 3D instalment in the series is. Brief glances of a stag head – with neck still attached – slapping about on the floor, a dirty wooden childlike doll gripping an oversized blade, a shambling figure moving behind stained windows, a blade sticking out of the back of something (some*one*?) crumpled on the floor... there's nothing that quite matches this on 'Cube.

SONIC

Sega unleashed the 'hog at TGS 2003 in the shape of *Sonic Heroes*. Handily, waiting for us back at NGC Towers on our return to the UK was a previewable build, which we've taken apart at our leisure for you on p30. There's definitely room for improvement, but it's decent.

NOOOOOOOOO!

Fancy doing a bit of the old John Woo-style blasting, diving sideways while shooting off a weapon in each hand? Killer 7 gives you the opportunity to do it, as this sequence of shots shows. We don't know if the blood splatter's from you or the other bloke, but it still looks 'bloody' cool. Garf!

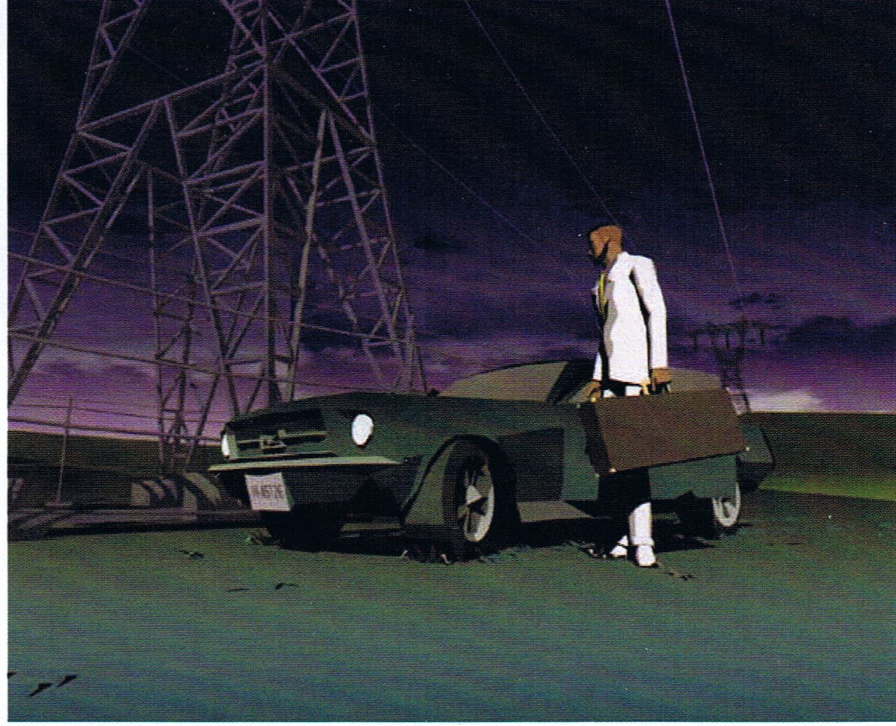



KILLER 7

This is what happens when Capcom go bad…

The beautifully crisp cel-shading's obviously the first thing you notice. Then the violence and the blood and… ooh, the pain. You really will pull a face when you see your first kill. As you should, probably. When Capcom do bad, they seem to do it very well – and this could very well be the most adult-oriented game we've seen in recent years (the sharp visuals and bucketloads of attitude lift this close to art). We predict that other developers more closely linked with Sony's machine will already be taking notes and sketching out their own takes on the snippets of action we've seen so far in order to create their own 'unique' games…



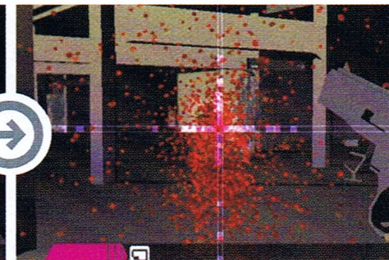


△ **Do you think that's a trombone in his case? And that white suit must take some cleaning – all that guts and hair and bits of kidney to 'rub out'. It's like a piece of art to look at, though, don't you think?**

KA-SPLUNSH!

Now this bit's disturbing. You're looking death in the face (or rather the back of the head), you pull the trigger and shoot the enemy. He promptly explodes in an orgy of bloody molecules. Not your ordinary hand-gun, then. But then in the Killer 7 world nothing's quite what it seems…







From anxiety and tension we switch to confusion and sickly-sweet stylised violence in the shape of **Killer 7**. Capcom have created intrigue and appeal with this Gamecube-exclusive title, thanks to its over-the-top graphic novel gore and through the lack of clarity of how the game mechanics work.

Capcom really are giving nothing away. Even at their pre-TGS press conference, where they revealed a trailer of the game in action for the first time, the game's Director and Producer (Goichi Suda and Hiroyuki Kobayashi respectively) said they had been told by Shinji Mikami (Mr *Resident Evil*, now with production duties across several titles) not to tell the press anything about *Killer 7*. We do know that it's heavily story-driven – which gives us the fear that it could be dominated by overbearing cut-scenes (something which *Metal Gear Solid 2* suffered criticism for). Indeed, the footage of the game shows off several of these, mixed in with the über-violent shooting sections.

> **"CAPCOM HAVE CERTAINLY BOUGHT THEMSELVES INTRIGUE THROUGH A LACK OF CLARITY OF THE GAME MECHANICS"**

The plot of the game concentrates on two main characters. Harmon Smith's the ultimate hit man – a 'god killer' who has seven different personalities that he can manipulate at will. Each of the seven has unique abilities meaning, we presume, that you'll only progress through the game by judicious use of each in the


DID YOU KNOW? According to Shigeru Miyamoto: "Shinji Mikami was worried that *Resident Evil* would be too violent for Nintendo. I told him that violence was not a factor and you can do whatever you want."



△ Straighten your tie, old bean. Jesus!



△ Commendable lamb chops, sir.



△ 'Crazed soldiers' have killed 65-year-old Harman's girlfriend, and he sets out on a mission to take out the man responsible for the action, Kun Lan. So begins the tale of revenge…



△ What's the bloke at the back doing?



△ This guy looks like he's bad news. Mmm.

challenging situations you encounter. His nemesis is Kun Lan, the 'man with god's hands' who has 'the power to overthrow a nation'. The game tells the story of these two men's confrontation across five stories.

Shinji Mikami's the king of videogame style and we're confident he'll be able to match this original and intriguing story to a level of graphic violence not really seen on 'Cube before. Capcom promise that *Killer 7* is 'going places no game has gone before…' Meaning what, exactly? The combination of first-person shooter fused with what appears to be third-person exploration sections, sandwiched between gloriously moody cut-scenes? Not *that* original. Perhaps the adult themes and Tarantino levels of blood and goop? Or maybe… maybe it's something we just

GOTCHA



Capcom also unveiled *Gotcha Force*, a 3D head-to-head battle game where you build a force of palm-sized 'Gotcha Borgs' (from a selection of 200) and take on the evil Death Force. It also features a trading card-style element where you acquire more borgs from your friends.

STARCRAFT: GHOST

Blizzard showcase all-new tactical action right here!



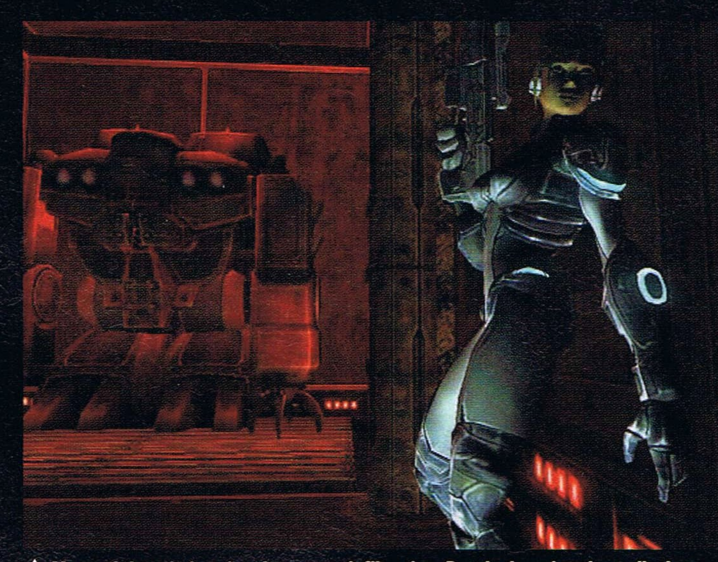
Nova, the star of this eagerly anticipated espionage and tactical combat romp (fancy!) is quite a girl. Not only does she pack cutting-edge weaponry, use her psionic powers to get one up on the enemy, get to hare about in hover cycles and siege tanks, but she can also call in a tactical nuclear strike. Neat. A mix of spying and all-out planetary warfare, this should arrive on GC next year…



△ You can enter Sniper mode at any point using Nova's unique C-20A canister rifle.



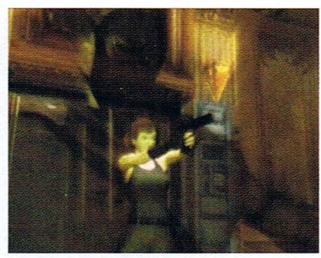
△ Moody lighting, huh? Looks like Nova's been spotted, though…



△ Many of the missions involve covert infiltration. Best be hugging the walls then…

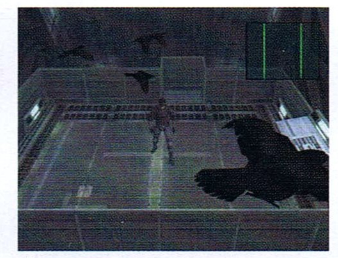
METAL GEAR SOLID THE TWIN SNAKES

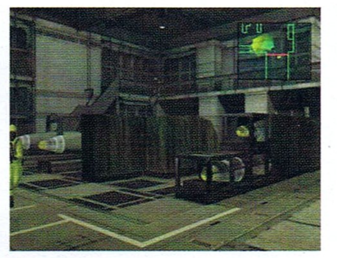
Look! Brand new shots of Snake's greatest mission.


△ Do not adjust your eyes – that smeared effect's for a reason…

If there's one game that can win Game of the Show awards at videogame trade shows *without being present in any playable form*, it's *Metal Gear Solid*. Such is the power of *The Gear*, and the marketing machine behind it. There's no denying the quality of the first game on PSone. *Twin Snakes* is a remake festooned with new features – not just the gorgeous visuals, but elements from *MGS2* and new additions exclusive to GC. For Nintendo fans who've never experienced it, it'll be a wonderful journey of discovery (don't let anyone spoil it for you). For everyone else, remember that bit wh…


△ Surprisingly, the snow particles have come in for criticism. Really.

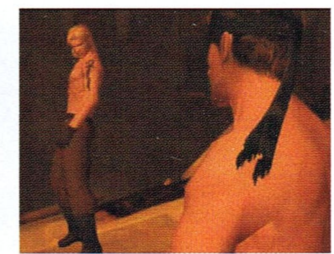

△ The AI has been enhanced. Look – even the birds look more intelligent!


△ Woah! Sorry, involuntary gasp at the detail on the floor there…


△ The plot is exactly the same as in *Metal Gear Solid*, but the cut-scenes and boss encounters have all been enhanced. Silicon Knights are keen to point out that this isn't merely a straight port of the original.








△ We have to admit that the character models are beautifully realised. That's the power of GC.

haven't seen yet. One thing's for sure, it's a title that's already generating a huge buzz, despite all the blanks.

Finally, it's time to focus on another controversial game now due to arrive in 2004. **Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes** is controversial for a very different reason, though. You might have guessed from our coverline this issue. Essentially, opinion is split. Some are really looking forward to finally getting to play one of the most influential games of recent years on Gamecube, others couldn't give a monkeys. We went directly to the source – you – and launched a poll on our sister website gamesradar.com.

Comments proved very interesting and wide-ranging. "Well I never played the original on PlayStation (what with being a Ninty fanboy and all), so I'm really looking forward to it," said one commentator. "I won't be buying the game if it is a straight port of the original with better graphics and a few new gameplay features from *MGS2* added, which is what it sounds like to me," offered another.

Whatever your feelings, you can't deny the development talent focusing their attention on the game. When

> **OPINION IS SPLIT. SOME ARE REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO PLAYING THIS INFLUENTIAL GAME, OTHERS DON'T GIVE A MONKEYS**

MGS POLL



As mentioned in the main story, we initiated a poll on the forum section of gamesradar.com. As we go to press, 55% of the members (and NGC readers) agree that they're looking forward to it, 25% fall in the Maybe camp, while 18% couldn't care less. So that's good. Yes?


Δ Twin sniper action. Or at least a frozen segment from one of the cut-scenes where not much action actually seems to be going on. Trust us, the unfolding story will warm your cockles…


Δ Silicon Knights promise the game'll run at 60 frames per second by the time of launch.


Δ There are around 3,000 polygons per character in the GC version (500 on PSone).


Δ A lot of people prefer *Metal Gear Solid* to its successor. The fact that you can pull off…


Δ … some of *MGS2's* moves and actions in *Twin Snakes* will please them even more.

Nintendo's Shigeru Miyamoto and Konami's Hideo Kojima get together on a project, and use the resources at Silicon Knights (developers of *Eternal Darkness*) to bring their vision to life, you should expect something memorable.

> **WHEN MIYAMOTO AND KOJIMA GET TOGETHER TO BRING THEIR VISION TO LIFE, YOU SHOULD EXPECT SOMETHING MEMORABLE**

It's true, though, that up until now things have been a little underwhelming – a little stuttery in places with a questionable frame rate. There's a lot of promising features in here – even though this is a remake of *Metal Gear Solid*, you can use all the abilities from *Metal Gear Solid 2*, such as throwing guards over rails, a first-person shooting mode and the opportunity to shoot enemies in different parts of their bodies – and it would be a shame to see those lost under a jerky veneer. The shift to a 2004 release date will, we think, ensure Silicon Knights get the time they need to do the title justice. We'll be the first to let you know…

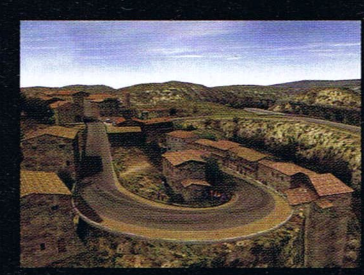
DID YOU KNOW? The planned GBA support in the game has been pulled to free up time spent on the main GC game itself. There will however be a ton of extras (polygon demos and similar stuff).

R: RACING EVOLUTION

Ridge Racer returns – but you won't recognise it…


Forget the drift-based arcade heritage of Namco's previous *Ridge Racer* titles. *R: Racing Evolution* leans heavily towards a sim style of racing. In fact, it's more of spin-off of the series that sits more closely with the *Gran Turismo* series. A well-balanced, 'serious' racer that breaks a 90% score is just what we're looking for to sit alongside *Mario Kart*. Roll on 2004…


Δ A 'stress' meter appears above other cars when you follow them long enough…


Δ … When this fills up, the rival driver tends to mess up and let you pass.

MEGA MAN X COMMAND MISSION

The *Mega Man X* series returns in RPG form! Woah! Stop pushing – please, give us room. Look, it's not available yet. Please. *Please!*



MEGA MAN BATTLE NETWORK 4

Another GBA outing for MM. It'll come in two colours (Red/Blue) with different characters in each and focus on tournament battling.




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TGS NEWS NEW NINTENDO HARDWARE REVEALED! P20

NEW DK INFO BEAT-RHYTHM KONGA DETAILS P20



PLUS!

- US price cut news.
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& MORE!



GAMECUBE PRICE SLASHED FOR XMAS!

NINTENDO GET READY FOR THE BIG PUSH WITH THE $99.99 GAMECUBE IN US – AND A STAGGERING £79 IN THE UK



Earlier this month George Harrison, Vice President of Marketing and Communications for Nintendo of America, announced they were slashing Gamecube's price tag to a supremely wallet-friendly $99.99 (that's £60, currency conversion fans). A highly aggressive move, and one of the most welcome decisions Nintendo have made this year. As Harrison himself put it, "this price is the perfect counterpoint to what we feel is an unquestioned advantage in hit software releases forth upcoming holiday season."

Such an aggressive move by Nintendo is the perfect remedy for anyone who's been getting disillusioned by their often-frustrating levels of complacency and sets them up perfectly for the coming year, not to mention placing them in a very strong position this Christmas.

"Consumers can pay $180 for an ageing PlayStation2," said Harrison, "or they can spend the same amount of money on the more powerful GC with *Mario Sunshine*, *Metroid* and *Starfox Adventures*… and it makes it a no-brainer for owners of competing consoles looking for another system".

NoA are also in the process of backing this price cut with a whopping $50m advertising campaign (see 'Who Are You?' story).

telling us: "There has never been a better time to get a Gamecube. With this new price we want every household to have one. The industry has honoured these games with awards for innovation and excellent gameplay. If you're new to gaming or have been playing for years, you simply can't afford not to have a Gamecube."

And he's right, you know. We'd have been happy to see 'Cube with a £99.99 price tag, but at £79 it's

> AT THIS NEW PRICE YOU SIMPLY CAN'T AFFORD NOT TO HAVE A GAMECUBE



It didn't take long for Nintendo of Europe to follow suit. Just before we went to press, they confirmed an 'estimated retail price' of £79 for the UK , with NoE head David Gosen

unmissable value for money. In the US, for example, sales quadrupled in the space of a week – something that's bound to catch the eye of retailers over here, who have been

STOP PRESS

PSO III C.A.R.D
If you're looking forward to getting stuck in to some online card-battling, we're afraid you may be a little disappointed. Owing to the relatively small number of Phantasy Star Online players in Europe and the game's limited appeal we're doubtful that PSOIII will see the light of day in the UK…

"WHO ARE YOU?"

That's the tag-line of Nintendo of America's $50 Million marketing blitz. Nintendo unleashed loads of Mario-head wearing nutters onto the streets of New York, carrying the new "Who are you?" slogans high above their heads, while the main print campaign features a handful of famous images, like the Berlin Wall and the Mona Lisa, defaced with various parts of Nintendo mascots. The President of the United States sporting a Mario head, for example. And the Mona Lisa with Peach's face.

If you ask us, they ripped the idea off Kittsy when he featured a similar technique in Game Boy Gallery way back in N64/47. Our lawyers have been notified.



continually marginalising Gamecube's shelf-space over the last year, and in some rare cases, ceasing to stock the machine altogether.

"We are delighted with this news from Nintendo," says Lisa Morgan, Deputy Chief Executive at GAME. "This will provide a real boost to sales, and is supported by some terrific new software titles. This price point is fantastic news for us, and even better news for our customers this Christmas."

For once we can positively say we're gobsmacked by the aggression exhibited by Nintendo – it's impressive to see strong words backed up by sound actions. If truth be known, we were half expecting Nintendo of Europe not to make any price cuts at all, so it's a very reassuring move for everyone who wants to see Nintendo succeed. Here's hoping they can provide a marketing campaign to back it up.

NINTENDO SPEAK OUT

NGC QUIZZES NINTENDO'S MARKETING MANAGER, DAWN PAYNE, ABOUT *THAT* PRICE DROP

NGC: Do you envisage this being the Christmas that Gamecube finally takes off?
Dawn Payne: Yes. We're extremely confident that we're in store for a fantastic Christmas. We're undoubtedly in the strongest position in the market coming up to the holiday season.

NGC: What lessons did you learn from last Christmas – is this new price point a reaction to last year's disappointing sales?
DP: Actually we've *always* planned to move to a £79 price point. The most important thing this year is to make it accessible to as many people as possible.

This year we have a *much* better line up of games – and by the time Christmas arrives we'll have over 200 quality titles available for Gamecube.

NGC: There's been a similar price cut in the US and it's quadrupled sales in a very short time - how do you think Gamecube's performance will be affected here?
DP: To be honest, we're not announcing forecasts – but we really expect to take the market by storm…

NGC: With Gamecube being the cheapest of all the consoles, don't you worry that there be an impact on its perceived value? With the public seeing it as being inferior or less powerful due to its low price?
DP: Absolutely not. We feel this is great news for the public. Gamecube will now be *so* accessible to anyone from children, to mums and dads, to all ages. Nintendo have had massive critically acclaimed games, such as *Zelda* and *Metroid*, and have twice been named publisher of the year – now everyone can have the opportunity to sample the quality we have to offer.

NGC: Do you see Gamecube being the machine of choice for gamers looking for a second console, then?
DP: Certainly. This price point will work two-fold. It'll entice new gamers, who may not have sampled the next-generation of consoles yet and it will work as a complementary console. Based on our extensive research we've found that GC is often a gamer's second console and this is due to our range of exclusive titles – games that aren't available elsewhere.

NGC: In the US there's been a $50m marketing spend on their "Who are you?" campaign – do you have anything similar planned for the UK?
DP: So far we're looking at a European spend of around 15 million (Euros). It'll be a completely different campaign from the one in the US, but we're not going to not going to announce anything just yet. We'll also be setting up a completely different campaign for for *Mario Kart*. We've got a big spend lined up for that too as it's definitely one of our key titles this year.

NGC: The GBA SP is now more expensive that the Gamecube. Do you not feel that the public will now perceive it as being over-priced? Are there any plans for a price reduction before Christmas?
DP: We have a good knowledge of our customers – they don't make any comparison of the prices. They're completely different products. So, no, there are no plans for a price cut at this time.

NGC: You've given an 'estimated' retail price for the UK. Traditionally, retailers mark this up by at least ten pounds (on the GBA, the SP and the Gamecube at launch). Even at the 'estimated' price, 'Cubes in the UK are still the most expensive in the world. Why?
DP: We can only give a recommended retail price. Ultimately retailers set their own prices and so we can only make an estimate.

NGC: Gamecube has long been cheaper than Xbox and PS2 and it's always had the best software – but for the last few months it's been underselling Xbox by a good few thousand units. How are you going to tackle this?
DP: We forge our own way in terms of how we perform. We don't view it as a race for first, second and third place. We're just doing what we feel is right now – and that's being aggressive and ensuring we're absolutely the best value for money in the market at this time.

△ Dawn Payne, pictured inside Nintendo HQ's Photo-Me booth. We wouldn't let her out till she coughed answers…

SHORT CUTS



N5 TO OMIT DVD PLAYER?

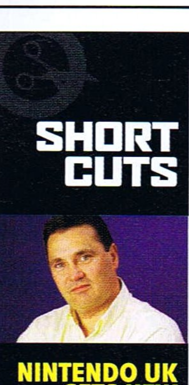
At the Tokyo Game Show, Nintendo's president Show Iwata made his views known regarding the convergence of entertainment functions (such as gaming and mobile phones) as well as 'multi-functional' games machines (ie. those that feature DVD playback). People hoping that Nintendo will have 'learned their lesson' over leaving the DVD function out of Gamecube may well find themselves disappointed in the future. Nintendo still aren't convinced that such a combination is a good idea, so don't hold your breath for it featuring in N5.



LINK TAKES THE TOP SPOT!

It's an unbelievable achievement considering the PS2's user base, but sales of *Soul Calibur 2* in the opening few weeks have swung in Link's favour. Around 40% of the people who bought *Soul Calibur 2* favoured the Gamecube version over Xbox and PS2 – a trend that has also been seen in both Japan and the US. At the time of writing, *Soul Calibur 2* has sold 800,000 copies worldwide.

GOOD CHOICE
In a move that makes the all-new £79 Gamecube even more of an enticing prospect for prospective buyers, Nintendo have just added four new titles to their Player's Choice range of games. You'll now be able to pick up Super Mario Sunshine, Metroid Prime, Starfox Adventures and Mario Party 4 for less than £20 each - although we've already seen some shops selling some of these titles at £19.99 for several months now. Still, an official 'budget' range of classics of this calibre can only be a good thing.



SHORT CUTS

NINTENDO UK GETS NEW BOSS…

This month Nintendo of Europe revealed they were getting a new boss to look after the UK. The fellow in charge is a bloke called David Yarnton, who's moved from Nintendo Australia, where he was Director of Sales and Marketing (the same kind of position as David Gosen) for eight years. We've no way of knowing as yet just how much of a difference he'll make to Gamecube's progress in the UK. Nintendo's Gamecube has hardly been a massive success in Australia, so we'll just have to wait and see. Anyway, best of luck to David – here's hoping he can deliver a great Xmas.

2 FAST 2 FURIOUS DVD

We've got five copies of 2 Fast 2 Furious to give away on DVD, for some reason. To claim one for your own, just answer the following question:

Which muscle-bound meat-head from the first movie doesn't appear in this follow-up film?
a) Vin Diesel,
b)Johnny Petrol
or
c) Norman four-star

Send your entries to "It's Vin Diesel you idiots", NGC Magazine, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW.
Oh, and 2 Fast 2 Furious is out to buy and rent on VHS/DVD from 27th October from Universal Pictures Video.



Δ Wireless links will be packaged with both *Pokémon Red* and *Green*.





Δ This console will surely become something of a collector's item.

NINTENDO'S NEW CONSOLE

Satoru Iwata announces some surprising new hardware for 2004…


Cast your mind back a few issues and you'll remember stories that we ran regarding Nintendo's interest in the Chinese gaming market, the rumoured update of *Pokémon Red* and *Blue* and Nintendo's patented pager device. This year's Tokyo Game Show saw our speculation confirmed as Nintendo's President, Satoru Iwata, delivered his keynote speech to the show floor.

The most surprising announcement of them all was Nintendo's bid to woo Chinese gamers. Widely regarded as a hot-bed of piracy, console manufacturers have been reluctant to target the country as doing so could be disastrous to future profits.

CHINESE WHISPERS

Nintendo, however, are confident that they have a pirate-proof solution – a console co-developed by Nintendo and iQue Ltd. Dubbed the iQue player, the console will play both SNES and N64 games. The iQue will use a 'proprietary flash memory' card that gamers will then use to download game content at special kiosks in game stores. There's no word as yet about which games will be available for its launch. If successful, it's a move that could open up a massive stream of hard cash for the company.

CABLE-LESS LINK-UP

Next up was, strangely enough, exactly what we reported on last month: a wireless link-up device for GBA. On the one hand this is fantastic news, as having a trailing wire between four GBAs can sometimes be a little prohibitive for multiplayer gaming. On the other hand, the devices will only be compatible with games that have the feature specifically programmed into them. The first of these will be the forthcoming GBA remakes of *Pokémon Red* and *Green* (*Blue* for the rest of the world). In a rather generous touch, the wireless link-up devices will be bundled free with the games (in Japan at least), giving Nintendo a sure-fire way of getting them into people's hands quickly.



DONKEY KONGA REVEALED!

First shots of Kongster's bongo-smashin', happy clappin' game in action!


Oh no. Please no. Not the DK Rap. *Please. Oh God…* Yes, Namco have done the unthinkable and included the worst, most excruciatingly awful tune the world, no the *universe*, has ever had the misfortune to hear in their gorilla-based rhythm title.

Still, you can console yourself with the fact that it's shaping up rather nicely – this first clutch of screenshots show a lot of promise.

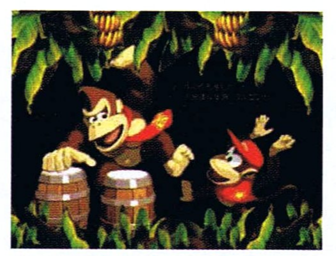
As we predicted a couple of issues ago, the game follows a very similar pattern to Namco's other drum-peripheral game, *Taiko no Tatsujin*, with players hitting a pair of 20x30cm bongos in time to one of 32 different tracks ranging from pop tunes, latin-dance and anime-inspired theme tunes. Oh yeah and that DK Rap rubbish.

Interestingly, leading Japanese games magazine 'Dorimaga' carries an image of hands clapping to the exclamation 'Pan-Pan' in their latest issue. This suggests that you'll have to clap to the rhythms as well as hit the bongos. Indeed, it's rumoured that the peripheral will feature a small microphone too. Perhaps you'll be able to "Ook!" along as well…

Most pleasing of all, however, is the fact that the game will feature a four-player option, and in some cases will allow up to four players to use the same bongo peripheral (thankfully cutting down on costs). The game's due out pre-Christmas in Japan – more news next issue…



Δ This is a shot of the two-player in action. Apparently four players will…


Δ …be able to play. Buying four sets of drums will be pricey, though.

ALL NEW F-ZERO FOR GBA
It's about bloomin' time. Maximum velocity came out yonks ago (for GBA's launch, no less) so the news of F-Zero Falcon Densetsu – a game based around the forthcoming anime – is very reassuring. Still no screenshots as yet though.

US GC SALES FIGURES
As we highlighted on the previous pages, GC sales have gone through the roof in the US. Just before we went to press, we had confirmation of the exact figures. In just one week Gamecube sold a staggering 61,000 units.

VIRTUAL REALITY YOU

NINTENDO GAMING MOMENTS 'COME TRUE'.

THIS MONTH

We asked you to be a Lost Viking. You obliged with terrifying enthusiasm...



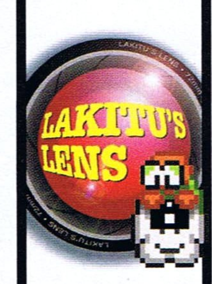
OLAF THE BEARD

Matthew Pellet. Again. We could say he's a rising star in the seedy world of Virtual Reality You. A little like Dustin Hoffman in Tootsie maybe. Or maybe not. You see, while old Dusty was getting camped up like a menopausal old witch to earn a living, Matthew here is simply humiliating himself. There's a difference.



ERIK THE ILLEGAL

The only thing better than perpetuating a national stereotype is perpetuating a national stereotype and getting chucked out of a railway station by security. That's exactly what happened to Norway's Eskil Vestre, Andreas Nakkerud and Kristian Alexander Harlem. Norwegians, it seems, don't care much for fake beards.



Waluigi in a Crimewatch reconstruction? Wario selling dodgy motors on Watchdog? Let us know innit...



ON TARGET

Keen eyes on Paul Ratcliffe from Derby. Shame about the quality of the pics, though – but we rented the film ourselves to check it out. In a shot of Colin Farrell's apartment in the Pacino movie The Recruit, you can see that he owns a Gamecube. A device he blames for his perfect aim with a shooter. Nicely.

WRITE TO LAKITU'S LENS, NGC, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

Our favourite entry (with photo or video evidence) will win a Precious Thing from our office.

PAC-MAN: FREE!

Get Namco and Shigsy's project for absolutely nothing.



Yep. You heard right. Namco announced at the Tokyo Game Show that their collaborative title with Nintendo, *Pac-Man Vs*, will be available for *nothing at all* when it's released in the US, but gamers will only be able to get it in three ways.

Gamers who purchase the forthcoming Players Choice re-release of *Pac Man World 2* (available in Blighty for £19.99) will get *Vs* absolutely free. Also, anyone pre-ordering Namco's intriguing *i-Ninja* (a title which, unfortunately, won't be making it to these shores on Gamecube) will also receive a copy of the game gratis. The final way to get it is to buy a copy of *R: Racing Evolution* and get yourself *Pac-Man Vs* into the bargain. And those are the only ways you'll get it.

If you've been living in a cave for the past few months, *Pac-Man Vs* is a Gamecube-exclusive title that utilises the GBA link cable for up to four players. Three players look at the television and take on the personae of the game's ghosts. Their visibility is limited to a small circle so they have to work together to hunt down Pac-Man. The Pac-Man player, on the other hand, can see the whole screen and uses the GBA to move around and collect the pills (like in, um, *Pac-Man* unsurprisingly). If one of the ghosts happens to catch the yellow muncher, the controllers get swapped around so the player who caught him can now be Pac-Man. It's all very basic and a little lightweight, but we defy anyone to play it and not have a cracking laugh despite all that. Hopefully Nintendo will have the wisdom use this freebie incentive over here – we'll let you know more soon.

BIONICLE®

Out now for your GBA

LIVE THE LEGEND!







GAME BOY ADVANCE







DISAGREE WITH MOST WANTED? Then email us at **ngc@futurenet.co.uk** or write to us at **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW and tell us the three games you're most looking forward to. Every month, we'll tally up the scores on the doors and change the list accordingly.



The games you dream about when you sleep and think about while you eat.

1 MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!!




UK NOV | US 2003 | JAPAN 2003

A few sneaky plays here and there over the past few months have caused some pretty heated debates in the **NGC** office. Is the power-slide as 'deep' as before? Is it fast enough? Are the tracks too wide? Any game that can spark threats of violence between staff members can only be a good thing, right?

2 VIEWTIFUL JOE



UK NOV | US NOW | JAPAN NOW

We really can't stress just how brilliant this game is, so it's reassuring to see you guys giving it the attention it deserves. Beautifully detailed and stylised visuals, superb effects and innovations aplenty ensure that this is *definitely* one of our games of the year.

3 FINAL FANTASY



UK SPRING | US SPRING | JAPAN NOW

Four players. Four GBAs. Four link cables. And probably four empty wallets by the time your local game store has cleared you out of all your cash for all that hardware. Still, there's no denying that this is a superbly crafted piece of RPG goodness.

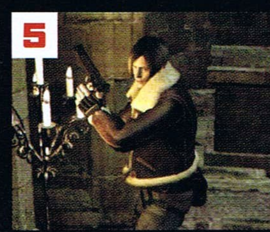
4 KILLER 7



UK 2004 | US 2004 | JAPAN NOW

Decapitation, head-stamping and jugular stabbing. While there's not *quite* as much blood in the game as there is in Kittsy's fridge, you're still guaranteed a thoroughly disturbing carnival of violence from start to finish. This really can't come soon enough.

5 RESIDENT EVIL 4



UK '200X' | US '200X' | JAPAN '200X'

What a difference a Tokyo Game Show makes, eh? After months of silence, Capcom deliver even more jaw-dropping footage of this fully three-dimensional horror spectacular. Yup, no more pre-rendered environments and, hopefully, no more archaic control schemes.

6 HARVEST MOON



UK SPRING | US SPRING | JAPAN NOW

Up one place from last month? Looks like some people out there are listening to us after all. If you don't know anything about this quality farming sim, then dig around in some bargain bins for either the GBC version or the PSone game. It'll tide you over till this arrives.

7 METAL GEAR SOLID



UK MARCH | US 2004 | JAPAN 2004

The jury's still out on this. Everyone here has played the PSone version to death, and recent sessions with the game have hardly made us tremble with excitement. Still, we don't doubt that Silicon Knights will deliver a quality product. They did *Eternal Darkness*, after all.

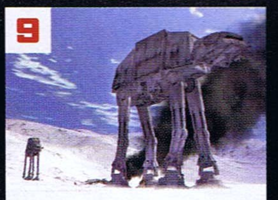
8 DONKEY KONGA



UK TBC | US TBC | JAPAN WINTER

At last, some proper shots have finally arrived. Don't be too put off by the blandness of the screens we showed in news this issue – the game it's based on, *Taiko no Tatsujin*, was a fantastic party game and so we're expecting great things from this.

9 ROGUE SQUADRON III



UK NOV | US NOV | JAPAN NOV

Hmmm. We *were* very excited about this, but after some extended play, we're unsure. Sure it looks very nice, but we're still totally unconvinced about the speeder bike sections and – even worse – the on foot sections. We'll have a full review for you next issue.



10 1080 AVALANCHE – 'Snow' abused using 'boards'. UK JAN | US JAN | JAPAN TBA

11 BILLY HATCHER – Rollin', rollin', rollin'… etc. UK NOV | US NOW | JAPAN NOW

12 POKÉMON COLOSSEUM – It's got an RPG mode too. UK TBA | US TBA | JAPAN NOV

13 TALES OF SYMPHONIA – Went down a storm in Japan. UK TBA | US TBA | JAPAN NOW

14 MEDAL OF HONOR: RS – Lots of shooting. In swamps. UK TBA | US TBA | JAPAN TBA

15 PIKMIN 2 – Veggo-philes in space suits… UK TBA | US TBA | JAPAN TBA

16 UNITY – It'll come… eventually… UK TBA | US TBA | JAPAN TBA

17 METROID PRIME 2 – More quality from Ms Aran. UK TBA | US TBA | JAPAN TBA

18 SONIC HEROES – Strange team-based Sonic. UK DEC | US JAN | JAPAN NOV

19 STARCRAFT GHOST – It IS coming now. Apparently. UK TBA | US TBA | JAPAN TBA

20 JAMES BOND: E.O.N. – More EA-branded bondage. UK WINTER | US WINTER | JAPAN TBA

21 ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS – Four Game Boys too. UK TBA | US TBA | JAPAN TBA

22 PSO III C.A.R.D – Strategy-based online action. UK TBA | US TBA | JAPAN WINTER

23 BATEN KAITOS – Another lovely looking RPG. UK TBA | US TBA | JAPAN DEC

24 BEYOND GOOD & EVIL – Odd-looking French adventure. UK OCT | US OCT | JAPAN TBA

25 MARIO PARTY 5 – 25th – it's where it should be. UK 2004 | US TBA | JAPAN WINTER

WRITE TO... MAILBOX/NGC/30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK




THIS MONTH

Check out our feature on page 10 for the very first shots of this musical Nintendo and Namco collaboration. We've also got all the latest from this month's Tokyo Game Show along with new shots of *Biohazard* (*Resi*) *4* and the evil-looking *Killer 7*.

ULTRA RELEASE LIST

The latest on every Nintendo system game in development – updated monthly!

UK RELEASES

The most accurate listing available – although be aware that slippages can occur. All titles Gamecube unless otherwise stated.

OCTOBER

24	Conflict Desert Storm 2	SCi
24	Final Fantasy Tactics Advance (GBA)	Nintendo
24	Mega Man Zero 2 (GBA)	Capcom
24	NBA Live 2004	EA
24	SSX3	EA
24	The Hobbit (GBA)	Vivendi
24	The Lion King (GBA)	THQ
24	Viewtiful Joe	Capcom
31	Bratz: Party Night	Ubi Soft
31	FIFA Football 2004	EA
31	FIFA Football 2004 (GBA)	EA
31	F-Zero GX	Nintendo
31	Sim City 2000 (GBA)	Zoo
31	Star Wars: Flight of the Falcon (GBA)	THQ
31	Tiger Woods 2004 (GBA)	EA
31	Worms 3D	Sega
TBC	Dragon's Lair 3D	THQ
TBC	Pokémon Box	Nintendo

NOVEMBER

7	Billy Hatcher	Sega
7	Bionicle	EA
7	Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds	Vivendi
7	Dragon Ball Z: Budokai	Atari
7	Harry Potter: Quidditch WC	EA
7	Hot Wheels: Highway 35 World Race	THQ
7	Hot Wheels… (GBA)	THQ
7	Jimmy Neutron: Jet Fusion	THQ
7	Jimmy Neutron Jet Fusion (GBA)	THQ
7	Onimusha Tactics (GBA)	Capcom
7	Power Rangers Ninja Storm (GBA)	THQ
7	Scooby Doo! Mystery Mayhem	THQ
7	Scooby Doo… (GBA)	THQ
7	Star Wars Rogue Squadron Rebel Strike	Activision
7	LOTR: The Return of the King	EA
7	The Return of the King (GBA)	EA
7	The Simpsons Hit & Run	Vivendi
7	True Crime	Activision
14	Beyblade (GBA)	Atari
14	Judge Dredd: Dredd vs Death	Vivendi
14	Mario Kart: Double Dash!!	Nintendo
14	Pokémon Pinball Ruby/Sapphire (GBA)	Nintendo
14	Prince of Persia (GBA)	Ubi Soft
14	SSX3 (GBA)	EA
14	Terminator: Rise of the Machines (GBA)	Atari
14	Tony Hawk's Underground	Activision
14	Tony Hawk's Underground (GBA)	Activision
21	Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu	Ubi Soft
21	Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (GBA)	Ubi Soft
21	Disney's Brother Bear (GBA)	THQ
21	Gladius	Activision
21	Gotcha Force	Capcom
21	Mario & Luigi (GBA)	Nintendo
21	Metal Arms	Vivendi
21	Spongebob Squarepants Bikini Bottom	THQ
21	Spongebob: Bikini…(GBA)	THQ
21	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (GBA)	Konami
21	XIII	Ubi Soft
28	Beyblade Super Tournament Battle	Atari
28	1080° Avalanche	Nintendo
28	Harry Potter & The Philosopher's Stone	EA
28	Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	EA
28	Need for Speed: Underground	EA
28	The Hobbit	Vivendi
TBC	Pop Idol (GBA)	Codemasters
TBC	Premier Manager 03/04 (GBA)	Zoo
TBC	Spyro: Adventure (GBA)	Vivendi

DECEMBER

5	Crash Nitro Kart	Vivendi
5	Crash Nitro Kart (GBA)	Vivendi
5	Mario Party 5	Nintendo
5	Medal of Honor: Infiltrator (GBA)	EA
5	Mission: Impossible Operation Surma (GBA)	Atari
5	Rogue Ops	Capcom
5	Sonic Heroes	Sega
5	XGRA	Acclaim
19	The Sims Bustin' Out	EA
19	The Sims Bustin' Out (GBA)	EA
TBC	Archer Maclean's 3D Pool	Ignition
TBC	Goblin Commander	Jaleco

TBC 2003

Bad Boys II	Empire
Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu (GBA)	Ubi Soft
Extreme Force	Namco
Good Cop Bad Cop	Revolution
Good Cop Bad Cop (GBA)	Revolution
Mario&Donkey Kong (GBA)	Nintendo
NFL Street	EA
Robocop	Avalon
Scary Tales	Wanadoo
Sonic Pinball Party (GBA)	Sega
Spawn	Namco
Urban Freestyle Soccer	Acclaim

JANUARY 2004

TBC	Arcade Treasures	Midway

FEBRUARY 2004

TBC	Sphinx & The Cursed Mummy	THQ

MARCH 2004

5	Kirby's Air Ride	Nintendo
5	Mario Golf	Nintendo
5	Pokémon Colosseum	Nintendo
5	X-Men Legends	Activision
TBC	Boktai (GBA)	Konami
TBC	Pitfall Harry	Activision
TBC	Pitfall Harry (GBA)	Activision
TBC	Tak & The Power of JuJu	THQ
TBC	Tak & The Power… (GBA)	THQ

APRIL 2004

TBC	Pikmin 2	Nintendo
TBC	Full Throttle 2	Activision

MAY 2004

7	Spider-Man 2	Activision

TBC 2004

Animal Crossing 2	Nintendo
Area 51	Midway
Beyond Good & Evil	Ubi Soft
Custom Robo	Nintendo
Custom Robo GX (GBA)	Nintendo
Dead Phoenix	Capcom
Disney's Aladdin	Capcom
Donkey Konga	Nintendo
ESPionage	Midway
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles	Nintendo
Fire Emblem (GBA)	Nintendo
Game Zero (Working Title)	Zoo
Geist	Nintendo
Hamtaro: Rainbow Rescue (GBA)	Nintendo
Harvest Moon 2: It's a Wonderful Life	Ubi Soft
Harvest Moon 2: Friends of Mineral Town (GBA)	Ubi Soft
Hitman 3	Eidos
James Bond 007 in… Everything or Nothing	EA
James Bond 007 in… (GBA)	EA
Justice League	Midway
Killer 7	Capcom
Mario Tennis	Nintendo
Mario Tennis (GBA)	Nintendo
Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes	Konami
Metroid Prime 2	Nintendo
Metroid: Zero Mission (GBA)	Nintendo
Mission: Impossible Operation Surma	Atari
Mortal Kombat 6	Midway
The Movies	Activision
NARC	Midway
NHL Hitz Pro	Midway
Nightmare Creatures	Ubi Soft
Pac-Man	Nintendo/Namco
Phantasy Star Online Episode III: C.A.R.D. Revolution	Sega
Pokémon Channel	Nintendo
Prince of Persia	Ubi Soft
R: Racing Evolution	Namco
Resident Evil 4	Capcom
Roadkill	Midway
Shining Force (GBA)	Sega
Shining Soul 2 (GBA)	Sega
Sonic Advance 3 (GBA)	Sega
Sonic Battle (GBA)	Sega
Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow	Ubi Soft
Spy Hunter 2	Midway
Starcraft: Ghost	Vivendi
Star Fox 2	Nintendo
Super Mario 128	Nintendo
The Suffering	Midway
Sword of Mana (GBA)	Nintendo
Tales of Symphonia	Namco
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Konami
Unity	Lionhead
Zelda: Tetra's Trackers	Nintendo
Zelda: The Four Swords	Nintendo



US RELEASES

The most important US releases. Fancy importing one?



OCTOBER
- 28 **Dragon Ball Z: Budokai** — Atari
- 31 **Harry Potter Quidditch World Cup** — EA
- 31 **Tony Hawk's Underground** — Activision

NOVEMBER
- 11 **Mario Party 5** — Nintendo
- 17 **Mario Kart: Double Dash!!** — Nintendo
- 18 **Medabots Infinity** — SVG

DECEMBER
- 4 **1080° Avalanche** — Nintendo
- 4 **Pokémon Colosseum** — Nintendo
- 12 **R: Racing Evolution** — Namco

JANUARY 2004
- 18 **Harvest Moon A Wonderful Life** — SVG

FEBRUARY 2004
- 12 **Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles** — Nintendo
- 18 **Starcraft: Ghost** — Blizzard
- 18 **The Suffering** — Midway

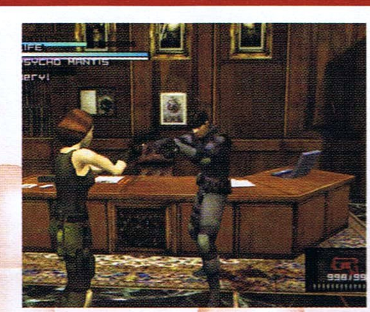
MARCH 2004
- 5 **Metal Gear: The Twin Snakes** — Konami

TBC 2004
- **Metroid Prime 2** — Nintendo
- **Pikmin 2** — Nintendo

JAP RELEASES

The best future Japanese releases. Crazy great fun.





NOVEMBER
- 1 **Sanrio Puro Land All-Stars (GBA)** — Tomy
- 14 **Harry Potter Quidditch World Cup** — EA
- 21 **Mickey to Donald no Magical Quest 3 (GBA)** — Capcom
- 21 **Pokémon Colosseum** — Nintendo
- 27 **Gotcha Force** — Capcom
- 27 **Phantasy Star Online Episode I & II Plus** — Sega
- 27 **Phantasy Star Online Episode III: C.A.R.D. Revolution** — Sega
- 27 **R: Racing Evolution** — Namco

DECEMBER
- 2 **Rockman EXE 4 Blue Moon (GBA)** — Capcom
- 2 **Rockman EXE 4 Red Sun (GBA)** — Capcom
- 4 **Crash Bandicoot 4** — Konami
- 4 **Sonic Battle (GBA)** — Sega
- 5 **Baten Kaitos** — Namco
- 11 **Momotarou Dentetsu 12** — Hudson
- 12 **Harry Potter to Kenja no Ishi** — EA
- 18 **DreamMix TV: World Fighters** — Konami
- TBC **Donkey Konga** — Nintendo

TBC 2003
- **Mario & Donkey Kong (GBA)** — Nintendo
- **Mario Kart: Double Dash!!** — Nintendo
- **Mario Party 5** — Nintendo
- **Metal Gear: The Twin Snakes** — Konami

THESE JUST OUT!

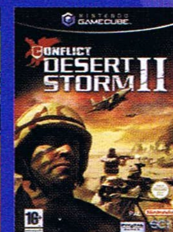
Missed last issue? Here's NGC's pick of the freshest games around…



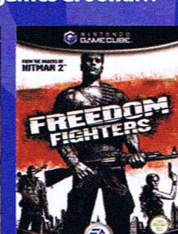
F-ZERO GX
NGC/85 ■ 93%
The speed, the challenge, the stunningly designed tracks… it'll remove your breath with supreme ease.



VIEWTIFUL JOE
NGC/84 ■ 90%
Sideways scrolling beat-'em-up with super-stylised visuals and stylish, addictive gameplay. Beautiful.



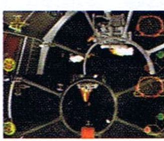
CONFLICT DESERT STORM 2
NGC/86 ■ 90%
Better than the last game. If you're into 'proper' war games get this now.



FREEDOM FIGHTERS
NGC/86 ■ 83%
If you're not into 'proper' war games, get this instead. Blast around New York fending off Russians.

WARNING! GAMES SNEAKING OUT WITHOUT NGC REVIEWS...

It's not often that we're prevented from playing review code prior to a game's release, but this month it's happened on three occasions. Draw your own conclusions…



ROGUE SQUADRON
Dodgy speeder bike sections and sluggish 'on foot' bits? It doesn't look perfect, that's for sure…



TRUE CRIME
Rumour is the developers want to *finish* the game before reviews come out. We reckon it'll actually slip till late November.



MARIO KART DOUBLE DASH!!
Due to timing, there was no way we could squeeze this in this month – next issue, though…

ISSUE 88 WILL CARRY FULL REVIEWS ■ ON SALE 20TH NOVEMBER





THE KNOWLEDGE

- Based on the cult comic book.
- Heady combination of blood-splattered killing and stealthy glass-bottle-around-the-back-of-the-head murder. Both ways pay.
- Unique visual approach, where sound effects have been replaced by, erm, 'word effects'.
- Top-drawer weaponry including crossbows, assault rifles, pistols, grappling hooks and chairs.
- Seventies-style soundtrack.

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Ubi Soft

What have they done before?
Splinter Cell (NGC/81) 89%
Fantastic, if overly fiddly, ultra-stealth. Clancy says "buy".



THE CROSSBOW LOOKS LIKE A FLIMSY WEAPON, BUT IT'S VICIOUSLY ACCURATE.

XIII

It always looked good but new code leaves us in little doubt it's going to play good too. Read on…



The biggest compliment you can pay *XIII* is that its chief gimmick doesn't really feel like a gimmick at all. A couple of minutes in you realise the game isn't just cel-shaded because coders Ubi Soft fancied doing a first-person shooter but didn't know how to make it different to all the others. It's cel-shaded because it allows them to push some outrageously good ideas that couldn't be done any other way.

Make no mistake, *XIII* is good.

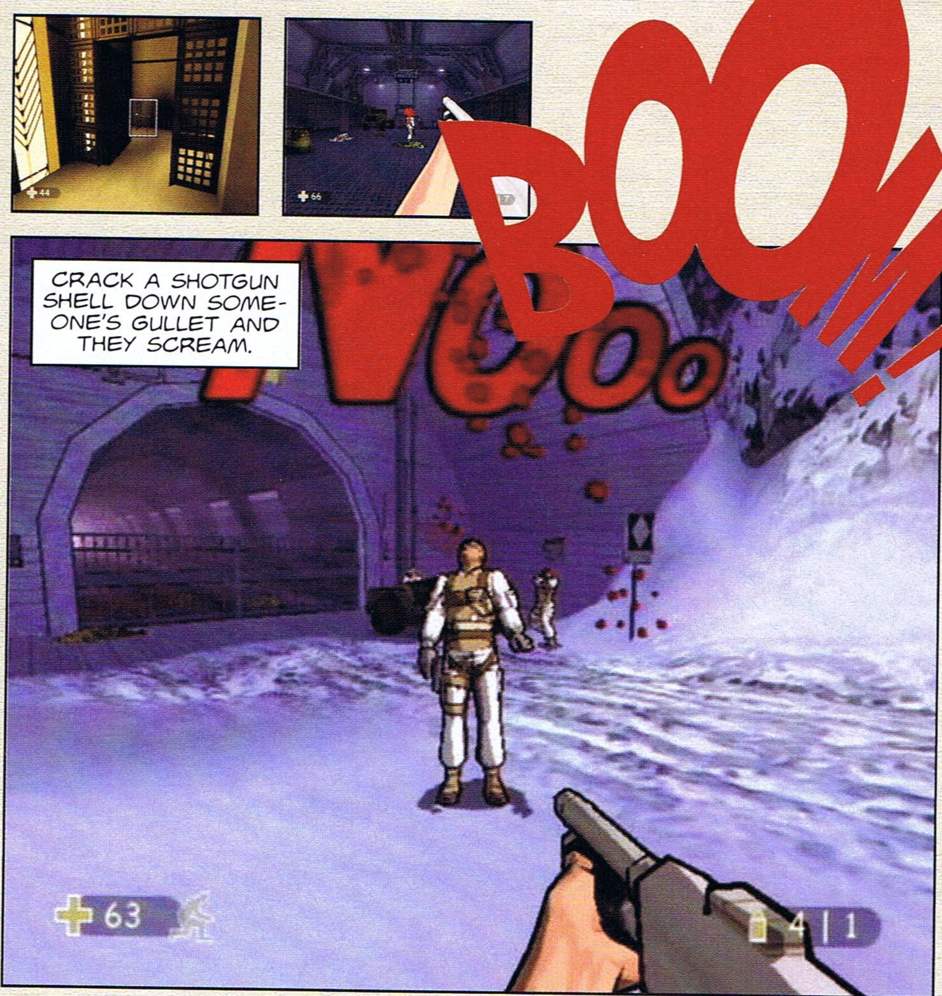
By the time the first level is over, you've done all of the following: had black-and-white flashbacks; been shot off the side of a boat; collapsed on a beach; woken up; watched the only person you know murdered in front of your eyes; lumped a fire extinguisher across someone's fat face; nicked their gun; escaped from a beach hut; fended off gun-wielding nutjobs with sniper rifles; and, finally, stolen a car.

And you've got no idea why.

Based on the Belgian comic book of the same name, *XIII* weaves a brilliantly mysterious plot in and around the action, chucking in flashbacks to past events, past comrades and past killings. True, you haven't got a freaking clue what's going on for the first half of the game (apart from the fact that you have to *shoot anything that moves*), but gradually things start to reveal themselves until, eventually, you're staring down the barrel of a deadly government cover-up. If the idea of using the original comic book was to introduce a snaking *24*-style script, then the extra effort of adapting it has been worth it – this isn't your run-of-the-mill game plotting.







THE BEAUTY OF TAKING PEOPLE HOSTAGE IS THAT GUARDS AND SOLDIERS CAN'T OPEN FIRE ON YOU. BUT YOU CAN PUNCH THEM.









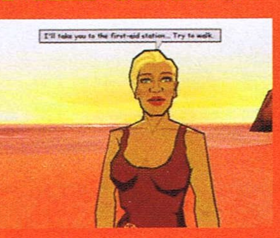
Playing *XIII*, you'll recognise plenty of regular components from other first-person shooters. The controls are pretty standard with directional movement on the sticks and bullets coming via R. The slight tweaks you adapt to quickly too: unlike the more straightforward blasting of, say, *Metroid Prime*, you can grab hold of hostages if you manage to suppress your footsteps, and analogue control really has had emphasis placed on it. Jab at the controls to inch forward and enemies won't hear you. Go full steam ahead and they will. You also have to take into consideration the environments. Cleverly, snow makes a real-world crunch so any sudden movement results in sudden sound – and if you make noises, enemies get very interested in your approach.

Where *XIII* differs most from the competition is in its presentation. If you wield a crossbow and manage to plug an enemy in the face with it, three comic strip-style boxes will appear: the first shows the arrow coming in; the second shows it making contact; the third shows the enemy going down in a shower of blood. This sort of thing is used quite a lot – when you enter a room, the game will draw your attention to objects of interest by forming a hand-drawn red box around them. And then there are the sound effects. Instead of *Metal Gear*-style footsteps you learn enemies are about from word-based sound effects. Their movement is represented by the word 'tap'. The closer they are, the bigger the word gets. The further away, the smaller the word becomes. It might sound rubbish, but within the context of the game's look and feel, it works brilliantly.

This reliance on visual clues really benefits *XIII*'s stealth too, of which there is plenty. Enemy approaches are tense and liable to go wrong, as it's difficult to predict *exactly* where foes are when you're watching

> **"SNOW MAKES A REAL-WORLD CRUNCH – MAKE A NOISE AND ENEMIES TEND TO GET VERY INTERESTED VERY QUICKLY"**

MEMORY!



The game opens with you, XIII, being washed up on a beach somewhere in upstate New York. A woman kindly offers to help you. But things go wrong on the way: a passing helicopter sparks off a flashback and you're whisked through memories of being shot off the side of a boat and a creepy dark corridor. When you wake up again, the woman is tending to you – bless her – and some heartless turd decides to kill her. It's here the game kicks off.

TURN OVER
It's a winter wonderland as we take you on a trip through *XIII*'s most promising sections. Don't forget your bows. And arrows. And guns.

LET'S HOOK UP!
TO REACH HIGH LEDGES, YOU CAN USE THE GRAPPLING HOOK, A SNAZZY PIECE OF MACHINERY THAT CLIPS ONTO HANG-OUTABLE LEDGES AND PULLS YOU UP.

100

ONCE YOU'RE ATTACHED YOU USE THE REMOTE TO YANK YOU UPWARDS.

HOOK

AT THE TOP, USE DIRECTION TO SWING BACK AND PRESS A TO JUMP.

100

HOOK

CHAIR WE GO! USE MAKESHIFT WEAPONS. NICE.

ARRR

NOoo

THE CROSSBOW WORKS WONDERS STEALTH-WISE.

100

BANG!

the words 'tap, tap, tap' coming up behind a pillar and not seeing or hearing the enemy himself. But the fact that there's a chance things might go awry means another dimension is added to play: if you mess things up, you've got to un-mess them just as quickly. Enemy AI is responsive and sharp, and although they tend to stick to the same routine, one wrong move will pull them away from their posts in order to see what's up.

In the preview version we've got, there's about eight levels, six of which seem to work just about perfectly. Tiny little flaws in the music, speech and AI will most likely be ironed out come the finished version, leaving an extremely impressive first three to four hours. Perhaps the strongest levels we've seen so far are in and around a snowbound military base. The plot reveals few details of where it is, or why you're there, although work your way inside and – for the first time in the game – a dastardly-looking general is talking about you.

Opening in snowy halfpipes that remind us of *GoldenEye*'s Sereneyva levels, the first of the stages in this section equips you with a standard issue pistol and what looks like a limp-wristed crossbow. In fact, the crossbow turns out to be one of the best weapons in the game. With a zoom on it, and an accompanying *pfff* that takes enemies down in a puddle of their own claret, the softly softly approach is how you beat the first part of the base. Because, make no mistake, soldiers will react to the tiniest things: if you stray out too far from cover they'll see you and take you out; if you sprint across wide-open spaces they'll open fire; if you use one of the game's many pick-uppable weapons, such as glass bottles, the sound will have them snooping around; and, perhaps best of all, like the recent *Hitman 2*, if you leave dead bodies hanging around,

"SOLDIERS WILL REACT TO THE TINIEST THINGS: IF YOU STRAY TOO FAR FROM YOUR COVER, THEY'LL SEE AND OPEN FIRE..."

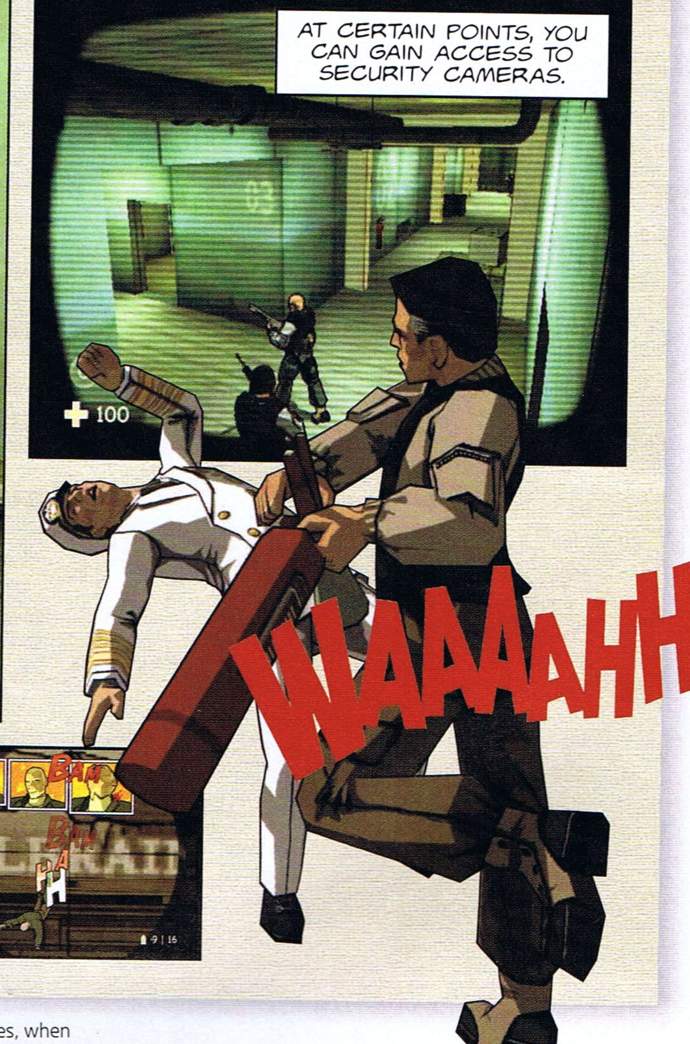
MOVE!

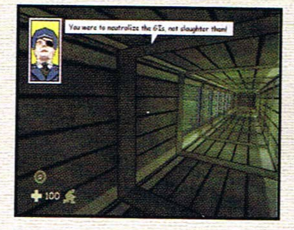


In a neat touch, you can actually move around in the game's cut-scenes. One of the first sees you having a flashback to a shoot-out on a boat. You can move around, even try to avoid fire, but after a couple of shots, you get hit and topple overboard. This is how most of them work – you can use the analogue stick to have a gander at your surroundings, but your movement is contained and eventually the game takes over again and does what it wants.













they'll find them and raise the alarm. The quieter you are, the further you get – although, sometimes, within the confines of the feet-thick walls of an installation, you can get away with loosing off a couple of hundred rounds from an assault rifle. But don't expect to be alone for long: noise equals trouble.

As previously mentioned, when stealth is the key or, as in some levels, you don't come armed, you can make use of other weapons lying around. On the second level, for example, where you have to escape from a high security bank without killing anybody, chairs and ashtrays are the only answer. Later, you can make use of glass bottles and fire extinguishers. This might sound like something fairly peripheral, but don't be fooled – quick decision-making is how you get on in *XIII* and sometimes, when you're desperate, clonking highly-trained foes around the head with a fag-filled ashtray is the only answer.

Whether the rest of the game can live up to the opening six or eight levels isn't yet clear, but what's for certain is that *XIII* promises to be remembered for more than just being the first cel-shaded shooter.

As an interactive comic book it's inspired, but the beauty extends further than just a neat use of the Gamecube's colour palette. Despite the fact that it's essentially pretty linear – there's always one main route and one main objective – the experience still manages to feel expansive, with intelligent enemies, *GoldenEye*-class stealth and a frankly fantastic weapons set-up which is also satisfyingly nasty. To be honest, we can't wait for this to arrive…

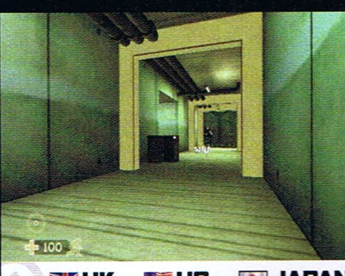
SNIPER!



One of the last levels in the latest version of *XIII* sees you getting the chance to fire off a few rounds from a sniper rifle, and it's here that you get to see that – for all its comic book looks – this is a very adult adventure. Line up a poor unfortunate, plug him in the scalp, and his blood spatters out like a squidgy, half-opened sachet of Heinz ketchup. As an added bonus, enemies stick around, so you can move them with bullet fire if you so fancy. Hours of fun.

NGC VERDICT

Not only is *XIII* a top-drawer first-person shooter, it's also a top-drawer stealth game, deviously clever in terms of AI and supremely exciting in places. In some respects it rekindles the fear and tension we felt creeping around *Hitman 2*. There's a couple of niggly things such as the occasionally wayward aiming, but otherwise…

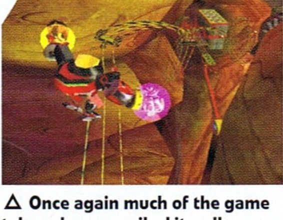


 UK 14 NOV  US 28 OCT  JAPAN TBC

ANTICIPATION RATING

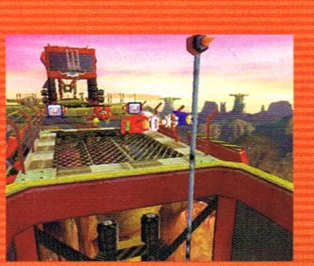



△ Once again much of the game takes place on rails. Literally.


△ Don't want to play as Sonic 'n' crew? Then pick another team.


△ Tails carries Sonic and Knuckles from his undercarriage. Ouch…


△ Hit speed-ups and bumpers to be sent pinging around the levels.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Play as one of four teams, each with three different characters: Team Sonic, Team Dark, Team Rose or Team Chaotix.
- Teams made up of three famous playable characters, each with unique abilities.
- Different storyline for each team.
- 'Infinite' paths through levels encourage you to play it again.


△ Switching between lead characters is a simple button push away, and the game makes it pretty obvious which character you'll be needing. Flying is Tails' 'thang'.

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Sonic Team

What have they done before?
Sonic Adventure 2 Battle (NGC/67, 70%)
Sonic reaches new depths – well, a third dimension, at any rate. Impressed? Hmm…

SONIC HEROES

They've been away for a while. Let's hear it for the return of the So Sonic Crew.



Hedgehogs. Not blue. But able to run faster than you'd think, although not while wearing matching ankle boots and gloves. Yes, there's a fair chance that back in 1992, when Yuji Naka first dreamed up the idea for his speedy plat-fest, he may have had more than a passing interest in the bonkers bourbons. Truth is, the last time we saw a hedgehog interested in a ring it was made out of pineapple. The ring, not the hedgehog. We digress…

"We don't need another hero," sang wail-monger Tina Turner. That's as maybe, but here's three at once! Yes, this super-powered woodland pack hunt in a triangle formation, one being under your direct control, the others following closely. At any moment you can jab Y and switch between them.

With Knuckles at the helm (the one with a pink Marigold flopped on his head) you're able to scoop up Sonic and Tails and use them as boxing gloves to batter your enemies. Your team-mates are sent spiralling outwards without any care for their safety with every press of X. With Tails in control the three travel in totem-pole formation with Tails able to carry Knuckles and Sonic below him, dangling from his underside. One tap of A will make the three of you jump. A second tap and a hold will set Tails' stump a-spinning and see you fly into the air. And with Sonic himself in control you… well, you can all run really fast.

Little has changed since the first true 3D Sonic, *Sonic Adventure* on Dreamcast. Once again the camera occasionally flips sideways giving you a more dramatic view as your team hurtle around loops. And,

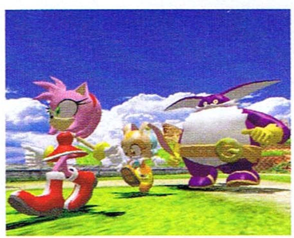

△ Looks brilliantly complicated, but given that you whizz down it without doing anything it's a bit of a swizz.

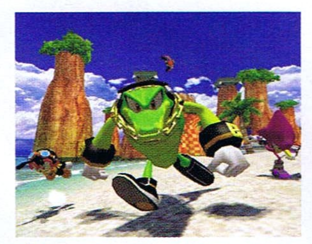

△ Team Dark are exactly that – dark. With red 'lowlights'. The different teams give different story lines but the actual levels are unchanged.

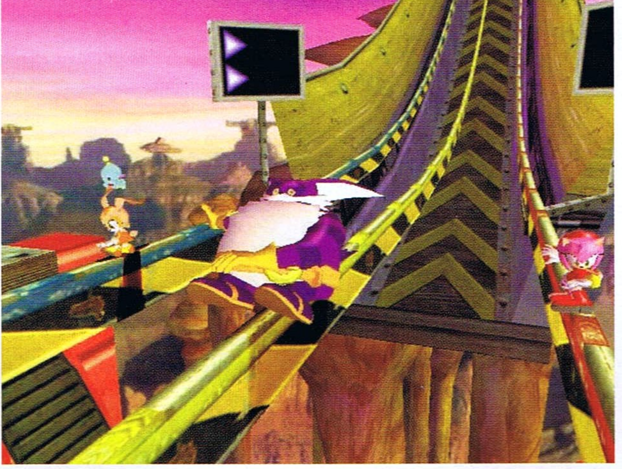

△ The characters run in a triangle formation with the two not under your direct control tagging along behind. You can lose them if you're daft tho'.


△ The 'Cube has no problems with the massive draw distance.


△ Unlike previous *Sonics* there's a fair amount of old platforming.


△ Team Rose are there for any girls playing. Or simpletons.


△ The new characters are pretty cool and expand Sonic's world.


△ Despite the sheer size of the levels (you can often see them stretching on for miles) the bit you actually explore is often just a narrow corridor.

RING BLING



Where would Sonic be without his rings? Once again your job is to collect as many of the shiny beauties as possible, and should you smack into a baddie you'll drop the lot. New this time is the special attack awaiting you should you max out your ring meter. Hit Z and you and your buddies throw a collective mental. Save it for special occasions.

indeed, like the first 2D *Sonic* a lot of time is spent holding 'forwards' and putting your trust in the level design as you hit speed-ups, collect rings, and whizz through the massive level faster than in any platformer ever.

"ONE HERO IS UNDER YOUR DIRECT CONTROL AND THE OTHERS FOLLOW CLOSELY"

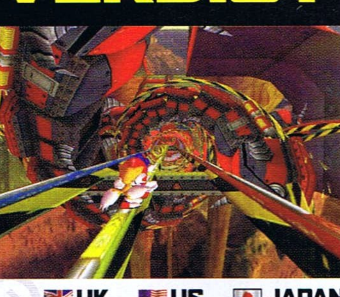
Everything works fine in this preview version but the level design – more complex than the previous *Sonic Adventures* – keeps halting that familiar whizz-thru Sonic flow. Walls requiring Tails' airlift move bring you to dead stops and enemies who can only be beaten by Knuckles' fighting skills block the Sonic-style speedway making the game play more like a conventional platformer and – ulp – less like a Sonic game.

Sonic Team can be admired for trying something new but in this case something 'new' might just be the 'old fashioned' methodical gameplay that the Sonic series scotched all those years ago.

We'll save final judgement for our review next month.



Let's be honest, the prospect of a new Sonic didn't exactly have us twanging our lederhosen. Yes, it looks good, it's got some new stuff but Sonic is getting as beardy as a wizard convention. Blah blah rings. Blah blah spin attack. That may sound a little harsh but the game is going to have to be special to restore our faith in Sega's once-mighty bushpig.







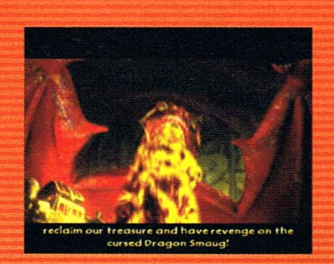
UK	US	JAPAN
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THE KNOWLEDGE

- Every major scene from the book is mapped out here, from The Shire to Lonely Mountain.
- Interact with characters in the game to unlock a series of sub-quests and tasks.
- There's a minigame too, where you have to collect 'Stonelords' to challenge other characters.
- Fancy variety in your murdering action? There are over 30 types of monster to find and slaughter.

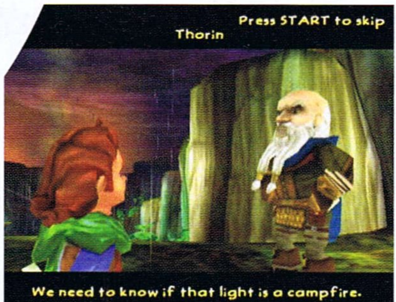


FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Inevitable Studios

What have they done before?
Defender (NGC/79, 50%)
Taking a gaming classic and turning it into a dull 3D remake is never a good idea.





△ Despite their large feet, hobbits are very good at sneaking. Go and investigate the light!



△ On your way to Smaug the dragon's lair, you'll be set lots of additional challenges.



△ Bilbo's not very resilient or good at fighting, so try not to get into this sort of situation.



△ Like the books, *The Hobbit's* gentler than *The Lord of The Rings*. If being mauled by one wolf can be regarded as gentler than being hacked up by 50 orcs.



△ The platforming elements are very nicely done, and work very well with the treasure-gathering adventure story.

THE HOBBIT

Take a step back to where the epic adventure first began…



As The Lord of The Rings trilogy roars towards its natural conclusion this November, we're treated to this, the game of the original Hobbit adventure. Here a young Bilbo is press-ganged into helping a group of dwarves recover their stolen gold from a dragon with a seriously unpleasant disposition.

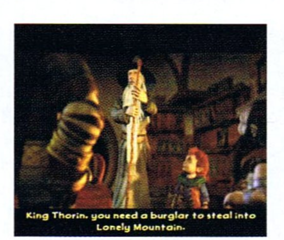
We originally looked at the game back in issue 84, but as a nearly complete version of the game has landed on our desks, we thought it was only fair to see if much had changed in those three months…

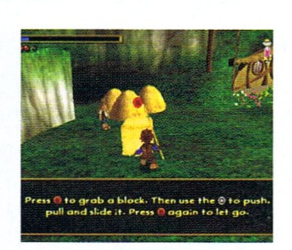
The answer to that is, initially, not a lot. The game still oozes a delicious, cartoony feel, with elements of the book – including The Shire, Mirkwood and the Lonely Mountain – rendered impressively, with characters to talk to, tasks to undertake and flaming pits to cross.

The combat is still rather ropy, though, and when Bilbo's facing a group of hairy orcs with a weapon the size of a potato peeler, you begin to wish you had a few more combat options to choose from. Finally, the gameplay still neatly mixes elements of pure platforming action with RPG sections and the odd battle scene.

> "THE GAMEPLAY MIXES PURE ACTION WITH RPG SECTIONS AND THE ODD BATTLE SCENE"

As long as there aren't any tragic mistakes in the last couple of months of development, *The Hobbit* could be a good, if not great, game.





NGC VERDICT

This version of *The Hobbit* is pretty much complete and it's looking fairly well rounded. Graphically, its feel suits the tone and style of the original book, and although there's a bit too much mindless wandering, there are plenty of sub-plots and challenges for variety. It's a shame the combat hasn't been improved, but there's still time…



UK	US	JAPAN
NOV	NOV	TBA

ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 **3** 4 5



DID YOU KNOW? If you fancy playing the original text adventure (Spectrum, Commodore 64), then do a search on the net. It's a bit antiquated, but hey… it's free!

ROBOT PALMER

Roberts. Don't you just hate them? Robert Wagner: Rubbish. Robert The Bruce? Pump. Robert... erm... Williams? Dregbiscuits. Oh no, hang on a minute that's Roberts isn't it? We meant *robots*. Easy mistake to make. Ah robots. Robots on the other hand – they're *brilliant*. Like humans but with erm... Metal Arms! (Phew. We got away with it. Keep going...)



THE KNOWLEDGE

- 18 different weapons in the game. Most of are upgradable with scope and power-up add-ons.
- 40 massive levels and a story to rival a Disney flick.
- Seven multiplayer modes including deathmatch, capture the flag and so on.
- Different vehicles including land- and air-based transport.
- Extremely tough with some bumslap-hard restart points.

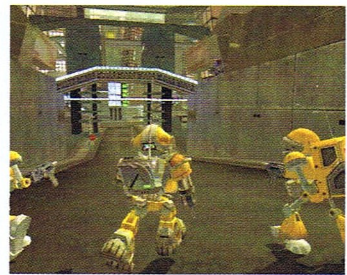
FACTFILE

Who's making it?
Swingin' Ape Studios

What have they done before?
Mother of pearl! Can this really be their first game?! Yes, it is.



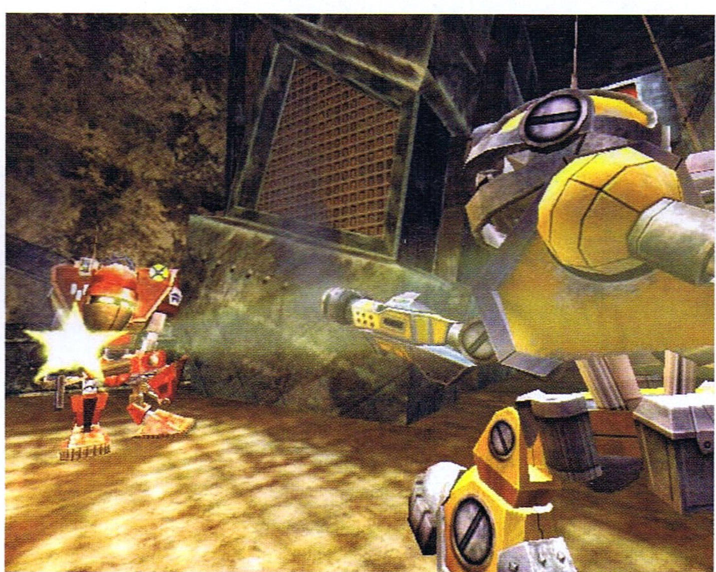
△ You'll frequently come across zip lines to slide down. Now how cool is that?



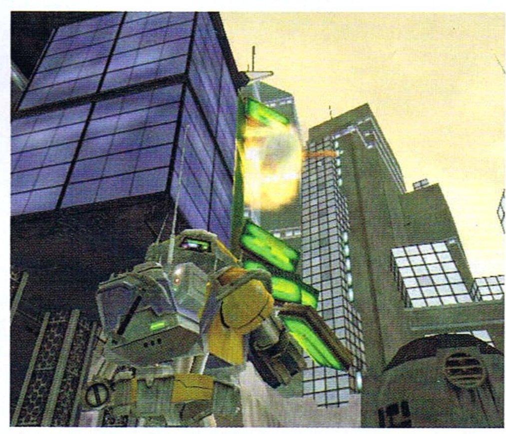
△ Often your teammates tag along and take care of a few bad guys for you.



△ There's plenty of variety in the enemies you come across, even if getting rid of them is a simple matter of blasting.



△ The game can be exceedingly tough. The AI on the enemy 'bots means that they'll pursue you around the level and take cover when you try to fight back.



△ Levels are huge and varied. It's quite easy to get lost or miss a potentially vital turn in the maze of chambers.

METAL ARMS
GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM

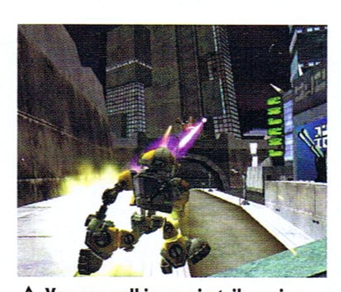
Metal Arms... Plastic nadgers, boom, tish, eyethenkewe. Can you see what we did there..?





Mmmmmmmm. Any opportunity to play as a robot (preferably a giant one) with interchangeable limbs (preferably with guns at the end) in a third-person action adventure that teams exploration with an almost unhealthy amount of shoot-'em-up style blasting (preferably with a vast storyline and a *genuinely* funny and clever script) should be leapt upon and grabbed with both (preferably robotic) pincers.

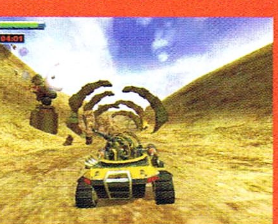
Yes, Glitch – your robotic persona – doesn't just have the Metal Arms of the title. The rest of him is pretty tinny too. The story (about a last rebel enclave of droid-kind battling evil forces on a far off distant steel planet) is one big excuse for lots of fast-moving combat with 20 on-screen droids blasting the dirty great grease globs out of each other. Battles can be truly mammoth with a storm of red and green laser bolts zapping around the screen. And make sure you pump up the volume – the explosions and metallic ricochets and pings really are second to none. It's the mother of all robotic wars out there and you're right in the thick of it.



△ You can call in an airstrike using your laser-targeting thingamebob.

And all this action amongst a cast of brilliantly voiced characters and cut-scenes that could quite easily fool you into thinking this is some kind of Pixar/Disney spin-off rather

DIRTY RAT



It's not all clunking about being a robot either. In certain levels you get to drive the RAT (Rapid Armoured Transport) too. This speedy but weighty buggy is equipped with a cannon for taking out enemy vehicles as you speed through levels laden with stomach-lurching jumps. Shame the landings can be a bit haphazard – you're never quite sure whether your going to land dirty side down or not.

MIND OUT

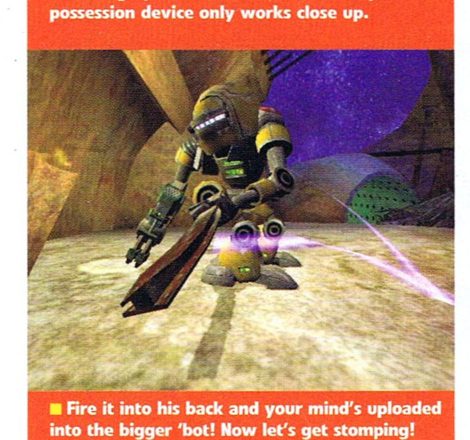
Take control of enemy robots and give them a taste of their own medicine.



Always be on the lookout for robots bigger than yourself. They probably pack a punch.



Getting up to vital 'bots can be tricky but the possession device only works close up.



Fire it into his back and your mind's uploaded into the bigger 'bot! Now let's get stomping!



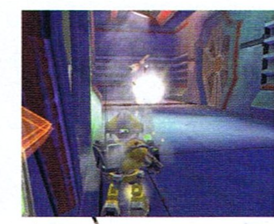
The camera does a decent job of keeping up with you.



The levels are packed with security systems to thwart.



Quiet moments are rare. Best make the most of them.



Your gun auto-targets so you don't have to aim much.



The more you play, the more new weapons and skills you pick up along the way.



This shield will keep you out of trouble while you run for cover.



Watch out for attacks by robo-planes from above and let 'em have it.

than a wholly original game in its own right.

GUN IN 60 SECONDS

Much of the fun comes from the variety of weaponry you come across and bolt on. There are 18 different guns in the game, ranging from your basic quick-fire laser (watch your overheat meter) to the ripper that fires circular saw blades – just the job for cutting through sections of scenery to send them crashing to the floor opening new routes through the game. Our favourite gun though has to be the basic rivet gun that, when powered up with upgrades such as the scope, becomes an A1-grade sniper rifle.

Our favourite trick, on the other hand – and a real unique gameplay element to the *Arms* – is the possession aspect of the game. By jacking into terminals dotted around the game you can take control of enemy robots, allowing you to walk through the midst of the enemy before choosing the best moment to go turncoat and giving them a taste of their own medicine. See the scumfrogs scatter! Ha!

There's even a weapon that lets you do the same thing. Fire the Tether gun into the back of an enemy and you can drive them around like a remote-controlled car.

> "YOU CAN TAKE CONTROL OF ENEMY ROBOTS, ALLOWING YOU TO WALK THROUGH THE MIDST OF THE ENEMY"

This is especially impressive if your robot of choice is one of the really big suckers about 20 times taller than yourself. Seeing your outclassed enemies flee for their miserable robotic lives as one of their own kind comes thumping back at them is brilliant. As is pulling the same trick in the excellent multiplayer mode.

Yes, four players can play split-screen robot wars. The arenas are – like the game's levels – both plentiful and varied. Even if many battles do degenerate into mad dashes for the biggest robot left laying around. Likewise prepare for hours of circle-strafing as all four of you clunk sideways firing off everything you have into whatever's firing back at you in a screen-blurring blizzard of bullety destruction.

Like McDonald's delish meat and breadisms, we're lovin' it. A genuine (steel) bolt out of the blue then. More please. Review soon.

NGC VERDIC.

Different = good in our book, and only slight control issues let this down right now. Fortunately the finished article promises control systems to suit all tastes. Right now the game is really tough, Glitch being underpowered in the opening levels.

It's big, it's brash, it's unlike anything else. Sure it's clunky – but in a really very good, very robotic way.





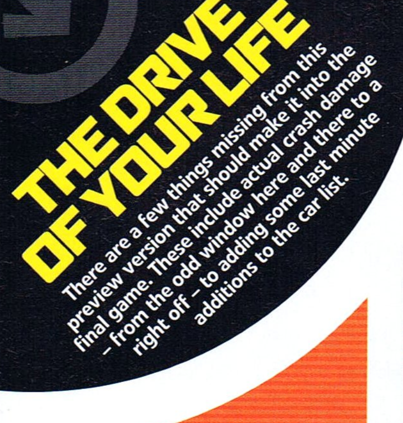
UK 21 NOV | US 19 NOV | JAPAN UNLIKELY



ANTICIPATION RATING

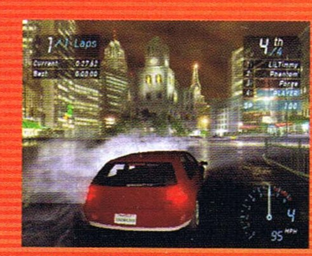


1 2 3 4 5



THE DRIVE OF YOUR LIFE

There are a few things missing from this preview version that should make it into the final game. These include actual crash damage – from the odd window here and there to a right off – to adding some last minute additions to the car list.



THE KNOWLEDGE

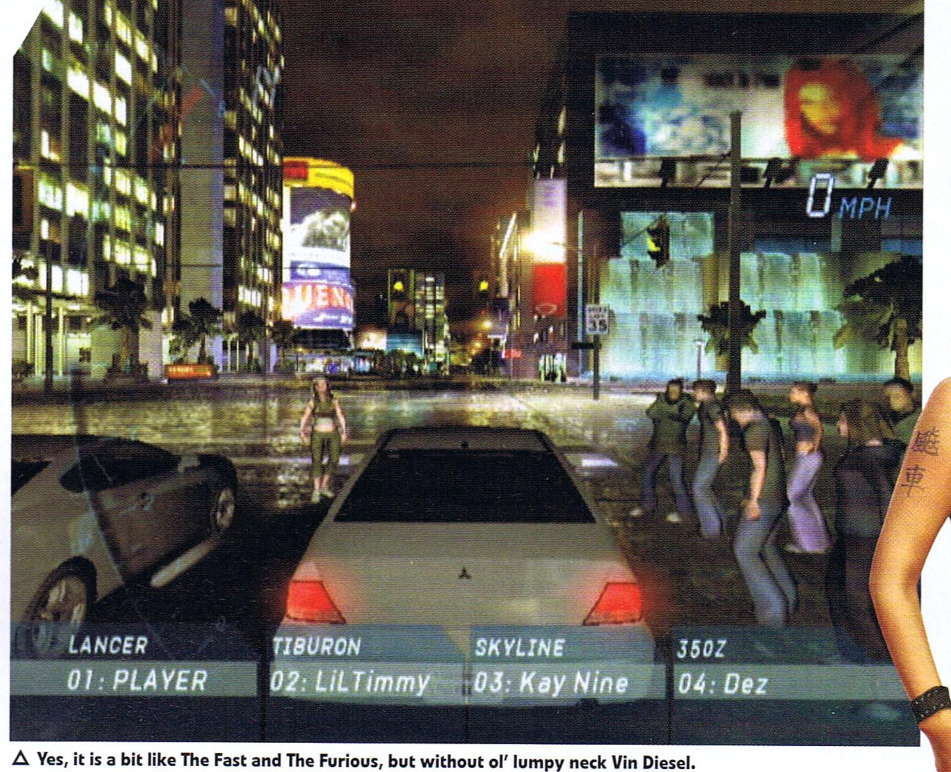
- A total of 20 fully customisable licensed cars from, among others, Mitsubishi, Subaru, Toyota and Ford.
- Pick from a bloated list of game modes, including Circuit, Drag, Sprint, Drift, Lap Knockout and Tournament.
- Earn cash, buy upgrades. Cars can be upgraded with all manner of shiny metal things and they're all from licensed manufacturers.

FACTFILE

Who's making it?
EA Black Box

What have they done before?
NHL 2004 (NGC/85, 57%)
A densely accurate ice hockey sim, but lacking the spit and polish of other titles.





△ Yes, it is a bit like The Fast and The Furious, but without ol' lumpy neck Vin Diesel.

I can read your mind you mucky little toerag.

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND

The need for speed? We want it, but can this racer deliver..?

When *Need For Speed* was originally released on the 3DO, the world was a very different place. There was no *Burnout, Gran Turismo* was a hopeless dream and yes, beer and fags were cheap *as it happens.*

Skip forward to the present day, and our turbo-charged consoles have everything we need. Super fast driving games that ooze delicately into your subconscious through your ears are popping up all over the place, so it would seem that ol' Mr *Need For Speed* has got a bit of catching up to do if he wants to play with the big boys.

> **"REFLECTIVE PUDDLES LITTER THE COURSES AND EVERY STREET, PATH AND ALLEY IS BURSTING WITH DETAIL"**

In the good corner, the graphics are impressive. Reflective puddles litter the courses and every street, path and alley is bursting with small amounts of detail. Track design is also exciting, with well placed shortcuts and long 'powerslide friendly' corners everywhere.

Continuing on a positive theme, the game modes are many and varied, so you can participate in a lapped race, or a drag down an inner city strip – complete with traffic and lethal obstacles.

Skulking in the bad corner, though, is the fact that, despite the game's title, the only real sense of speed we found was in the drag mode – with the other races feeling decidedly sluggish. As always in life, you see, there's good things and bad things. But, to be fair, we were playing an early version of the game. If the car detail can be improved, along with a better frame-rate and a bit more speed on some of the tracks, then *NFSU* could well be a decent game.



NGC VERDICT

Initially, the feeling that *Need For Speed Underground* gives off is one of disappointment. The car models look a bit shabby, it's hard to spot your route on the cluttered tracks and the feeling of speed is, well, needed. The longer we played it, though, the more we warmed to it – although definitely not enough to worry *Burnout 2* fans. Review soon.



 UK 28 NOV
 US 17 NOV
 JAPAN TBC


ANTICIPATION RATING


DID YOU KNOW? After doing some maths, we reckon that there has been a total of 16 *Need For Speed* games, but this is only the third one to appear on a Nintendo console.



BECOME A LEGEND
"...the wrestling game to die for..."
Nintendo Official Magazine
May 2003
"...yet another smash-hit WWE title..."
C&VG – June 2003
WrestleMania XIX
Where SUPERSTARS Become LEGENDS.
FUTURE MEDIA CREATORS YUKE'S
World Wrestling Entertainment
NINTENDO GAMECUBE
JAKKS Pacific inc.
THQ
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STOP PRESS!

Good things come to those who wait. So we've reserved some space for games that come in bang on our deadline, right here for you each month. We'll be cramming these pages with the very latest screens and info each i… you won't miss a thing...

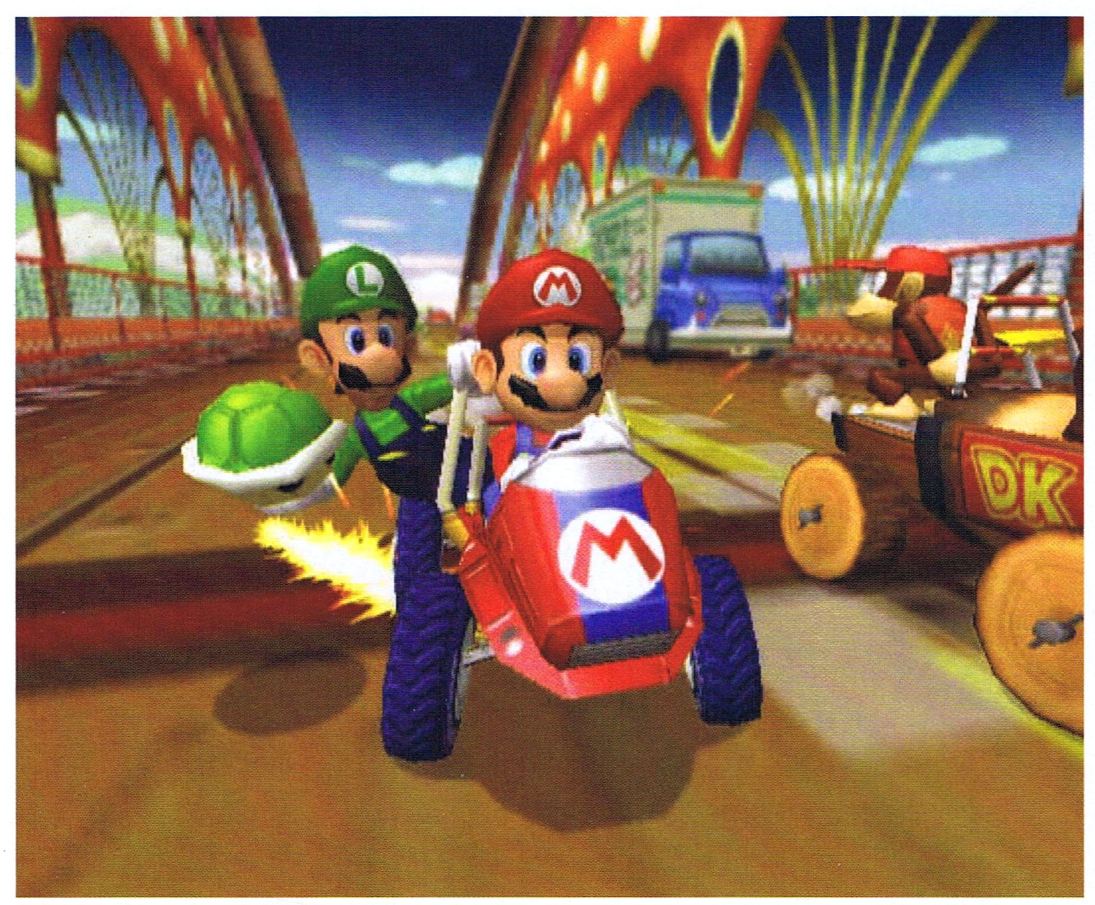
EVERY OTHER NEW GAME THAT MATTERS – EVERY SINGLE MONTH!

ROUNDUP

△ *Double Dash!!* supports one- to four-player races and battles, plus two-player co-op in Grand Prix mode!

DID YOU KNOW? If you live in Oakland, California, you can pop down to Yoshi's world class jazz house and Japanese restaurant. Eat to the beat!





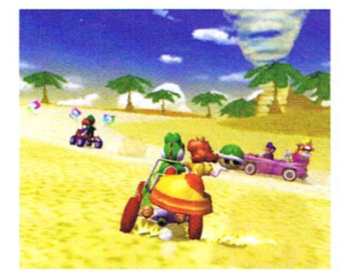
△ Luigi's packing a green shell – still one of the most irritating weapons in the game (yeah, you just watch it bonk into the wall up ahead and come straight back at you…). One of our favourite weapons is the babies' Chain Chomp. *Aaw*, look at its ickle teeth…



△ Diddy's got hold of the winged shell. It'll fly up into the air and come down hard on Bowser who's in the lead…



△ Own up, who's picked Peach and Daisy? Well, at least the girls don't have to try to find reverse gear often…



△ Dry Dry Desert's the fourth and final course in Mushroom Cup.

MARIO KART DOUBLE DASH!!

Arguably the most anticipated game since Gamecube's launch is only a matter of weeks away.

So close you can feel Yoshi's musty breath bearing down on your exhaust pipe, it's time for one last look at this Christmas' most anticipated videogame before our review special next issue.

In a bid to make *Kart's* 'Cube debut even more appetising to our US cousins (who get the game after us for once), Nintendo of America are giving away a demo disc to those who pre-order the game. On it are playable demos of *Mario Party 5*, *F-Zero GX*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *Star Wars Rogue Squadron 3: Rebel Strike* and *Sonic Heroes*, and a selection of rolling demos (including *1080° Avalanche*, *Pokémon Colosseum* and *Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup*). Plus, it also unlocks extra weapons, abilities and music in the upcoming GBA game *Fire Emblem* once you link your GC to your GBA.

> **"PACKED WITH TOUCHES THAT MAKE YOU PROUD TO BE A NINTENDO FAN"**

This level of generosity by Nintendo is impressive, except that… er, there doesn't seem to be a similar deal for the UK.

At the end of the day, the quality of *Double Dash!!* is far more important. We think it's going to shine through after playing a much more advanced build recently. The speed issues no longer seem the problems they were six months ago, and the courses are packed with touches that make you proud to be a Nintendo fan. As well as some inventive trackside elements and locations (Daisy's cruise liner, for instance), the actual layouts themselves seem very well balanced – ease yourself in with Mushroom Cup's Baby Park, then test your well-honed skills on the super-snaking Yoshi Circuit.

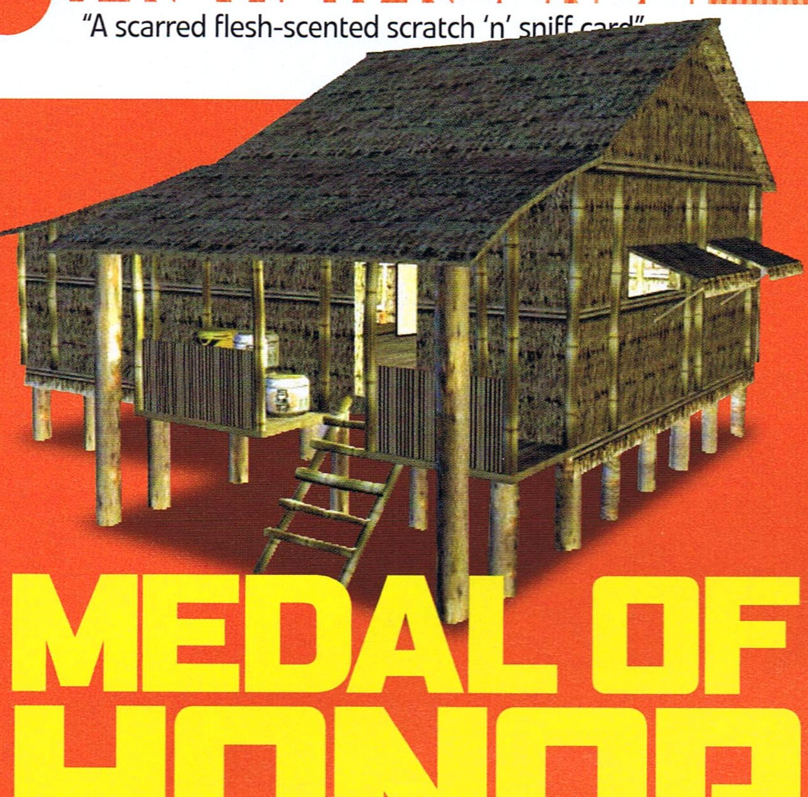


△ Apology: last month we called Waluigi Stadium 'Wario' Stadium. Erk.

The character-specific power-ups and tactics involved with switching your two co-drivers mid-race are just the icing on a very sweet cake…

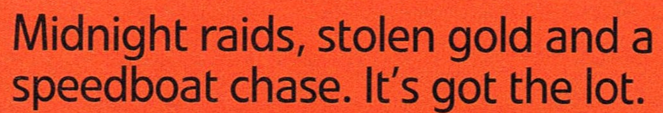
The waiting stops on 14th November

"A scarred flesh-scented scratch 'n' sniff card"





MEDAL OF HONOR RISING SUN







Midnight raids, stolen gold and a speedboat chase. It's got the lot.

The only way EA are going to make *Medal of Honor* more realistic is to stick a scarred flesh-scented scratch 'n' sniff card in the game box. Take *Rising Sun*, which features more than 20 authentic WWII weapons, faithfully recreated locations such as Burma and the River Kwai (complete with bridge) and some beautiful environmental effects (lovely weather, EA).

Frontline paid just as much attention to period detail. *Rising Sun* ups the ante, though, with a much stronger degree of storytelling (each of Marine Corporal Joseph Griffin's squad members has his own storyline), more believable AI (watch everyone dive for cover when under attack) and a concentrated effort to allow the player to take multiple routes to achieving a level's goal.

We only hope that, unlike *Frontline*, this Pacific-based campaign can sustain the tension and innovation shown in its opening sequence, this time focused on the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. We're confident Electronic Arts have taken criticisms on board – *SSX*, *FIFA* and *The Lord of the Rings* have all seen a definite leap in quality this year…

Get your medal on 28th November









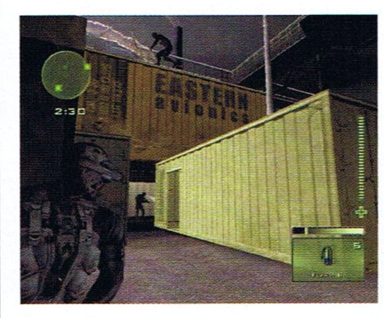
CRASH NITRO KART

A semi-sequel to *Crash Team Racing* – one of the most popular kart racers on PSone (some even said its course design rivalled that of *Mario Kart 64's* – the cheek…). Even if *Nitro Kart's* 17 raceways don't set your world on fire, the plot should at least leave you smiling. In order to save Earth from destruction the stinking bandicoot must rip through jungles, avoid erupting volcanoes, burn through futuristic cities and space stations. As you do. It'll support up to eight players – but it's got its work cut out against *Mazza Kart*…

Out 5th December





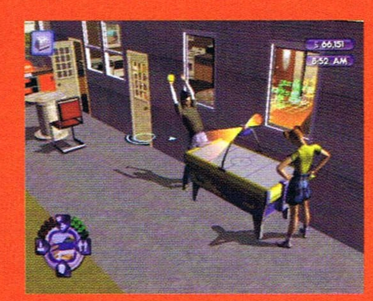


SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW

Our spies have managed to acquire guff-all solid information this month – apart from the fact that its US release date now looks certain to be March, but we did manage to prise a couple of new screens from their dead fingers. More cinematic than its predecessor, we hope Ubi Soft are concentrating on making the Gamecube version just as appealing as the version that'll appear on Xbox (regular readers will recognise our frustration with the 'dumbing down' of the 'Cube version of the first game). While online elements are set to appear in the other console and PC versions, we're confident Nintendo gamers will have to put up with a GBA-GC link facility instead. Hey, you never know. Sorry, we're sounding a bit negative. We don't really mean to be – new, admittedly well-edited footage of *Pandora Tomorrow* looks intriguing…

Available early in 2004





THE SIMS BUSTIN' OUT

Yes, *The Sims* was slow, a little fiddly to work with and looked a bit of a pig, but it charmed us for hours at a time.

Bustin' Out moves the successful formula on enough for it to feel fresh and exciting. This time you have to take your Sims through one of ten dubious careers, such as Mobster, Mad Scientist and Fashion Victim. Other new features include a two-player co-op/head-to-head option and the chance to customise the personality of your Sims.

Supposedly ready for 19th December



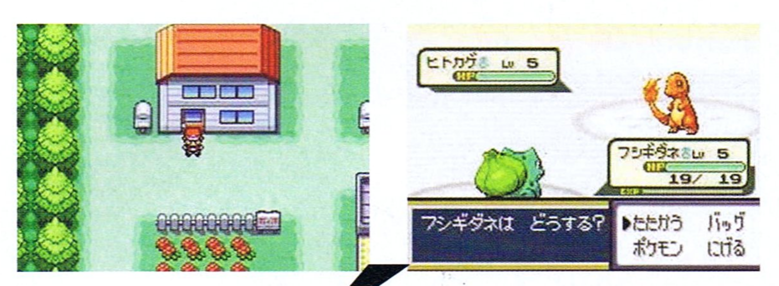


MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE OPERATION SURMA

The first *Mission: Impossible* game on N64 was supremely shabby in places, with spam-fingered analogue controls, unfair AI and an over-reliance on trial and error. "The sequel has a lot of work to do," we said.

We have no idea if this has done enough, but hell, it looks good. There are multiple paths to completing each mission, exotic locations such as the Middle East and Eastern Europe and IMF-style gadgets to get to grips with. We're also intrigued by the 'mind-blowing' disguises. That'll be a first.

Release date still TBC (sometime in 2004)



POKÉMON FIRE RED/LEAF GREEN

Compatibility's the key with the 'remake' of *Pokémon Red/Green* (aka *Red/Blue* outside of Japan), where you start the game's with one of three 'classic' Pokémon (Squirtle, Bulbasaur or Charmander). It's compatible with *Pokémon Ruby/Sapphire* so you can trade and battle across the two (all right, four) games – unlocking those monsters you couldn't catch in *Ruby/Sapphire*. It'll also be compatible with 3D battle-fest *Pokémon Colosseum* on Gamecube (released over here next March).

Release date still TBC

CROUCHING TIGER HIDDEN DRAGON





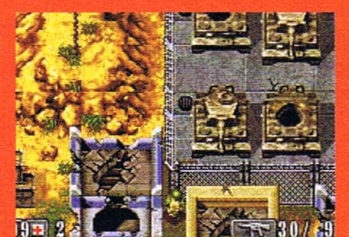
We think someone at Ubi Soft's getting a little carried away. We find it hard to believe that any Game Boy Advance pak can 'transcend the laws of space, gravity and the human body'. Still, as martial arts-style beat-'em-ups go, this might be okay. Choose your favourite unique move-packin' character, beat the challenges the game hurls at you to enhance your skills and ultimately defeat the creepy Jade Fox. Quite how the Woo-Pin Yeun-inspired choreography (he's the bloke who planned the action sequences for the movie, as well as The Matrix and Kill Bill) will come across on the GBA screen remains to be seen. Of course.

It all kicks off on 21st November

MEDAL OF HONOR INFILTRATOR



Here, you fill the boots of Corporal Jake Murphy, going behind enemy lines in five WWII missions. It's a completely separate storyline to Gamecube's *Rising Sun*, with the action taking place over 15 levels set in Africa and on both the Western and Eastern Fronts. But you can link to the 'Cube when playing *Rising Sun* and your GBA then acts as a real-time map. *Infiltrator* seems pretty decent in its own right, though, with overhead third-person bits, fixed-position first-person sniping sections and vehicle-based action sequences.



Infiltrate on 5th December

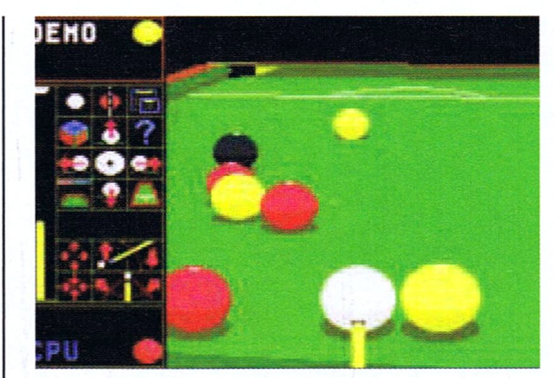




THE SIMS BUSTIN' OUT

Brilliant. Now you can bust out on the bus or on the bog. The first hand-held version of *The Sims* gives you direct control over your Sim, so no need to click on multiple items and hang around. Instead you can bust out of the house and explore different locations. And of course there's a GBA-GC link option. Connect a GBA without a game in to *Bustin' Out* on 'Cube and you download mini-games to your GBA. Connect a GBA to another GBA and you unlock a secret location, Paradise Island – although you'll need two copies of the game for this.

Out the same day as the 'Cube version (19th December)



ARCHER MACLEAN'S 3D POOL

Hands up who remembers the original Amiga version? Yes, you sir. You sir at the back. Oh, you're quite old. Well look at this. Packed into this £15 GBA pak will be variations on American and UK pool, a trick shot table editor and a tidy menu-driven control system. Shaping up lovely…

Available sometime in December





SPYRO: ADVENTURE

The story's the usual fluffy muck (something about Spyro and his clumsy mates 'inadvertently' tearing a hole in the fabric of space and droves of Rhynoc pouring through and… oh, it's hard to care) and the platforming action, viewed from an isometric perspective looks equally bright and harmless. But, hey, at least there's co-op and head-to-head modes. One for the little bods…

Available to buy from an undisclosed day in November









PRINCE OF PERSIA THE SANDS OF TIME

This follows the same story as the Gamecube version (out next year), but takes place in a beautifully crafted 2D sprite-driven landscape. More action-oriented than the slow-paced original *Prince of Persia*, this features a novel new Sands of Time twist. If you've got enough energy, the Sands allow you to reverse time. Miss a jump and you can rewind the action to put you back where you started. Great stuff.

Time runs out on 14th November





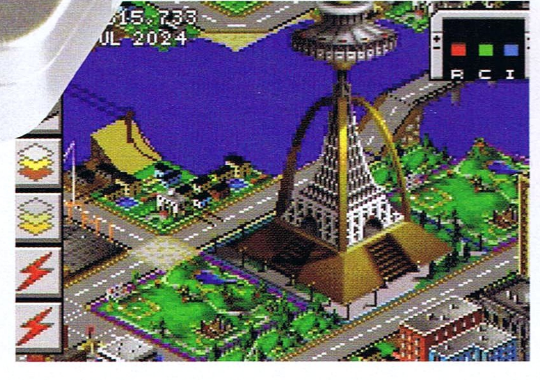
MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE OPERATION SURMA



Yep, the Hunt's back. This time your mission's to lead your team around the globe and prevent the Surma Corporation from achieving global domination through their ICEWorm computer virus. Thankfully, it seems you'll be given some options as to how you tackle this. You can charge in with IMF weaponry and gadgets, you can opt for the stealthy, hide-in-the-shadows-and-pop-enemies-with-tranqs approach, or you can attempt to forge alliances with dodgy sources. Quite how free this system will be is a little hazy – will you be repeatedly punished for going in shooting the place up in order to guide you to a more shadow-hugging route? Expect a GBA-GC link as well (although it's a little unclear what that'll give you).

Self-destructing on 5th December

SIM CITY 2000



While you're able to squeeze an entire community into your pocket with *The Sims, SimCity 2000* crams hundreds of thousands of tiny, demanding citizens, road upon road of factories, offices and shops – even the odd earthquake and plane crash – onto a matchbox-sized screen. We have no idea how it'll work though – anyone who's played the PC original will know how big the game map can get…

Start building on 31st October

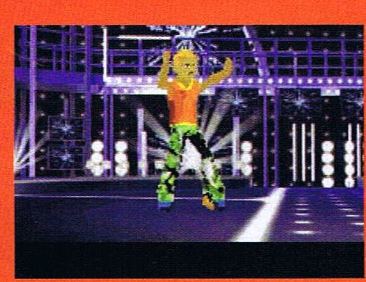


POP IDOL

You're really going to have to buy a set of headphones (and a bleedin' headphone adaptor if you've got an SP) to get the most from Codemasters' first Game Boy title in ages. The idea's simple: drum the buttons in time with the on-screen prompts to control the singing and dancing of your Pop Idol wannabe. There are 20 top-ten songs to get your fingers round, including 'Let Me Entertain You' and 'Like A Virgin'.

Hit all the right notes in November





www.nfs-underground.co.uk

Set your clock for midnight. 21.11.03





PlayStation 2






GAME BOY ADVANCE


NEED FOR SPEED
UNDERGROUND
EA GAMES
Challenge Everything



NGC THE VERDICT YOU DESERVE!

REVIEWS



THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE RETURN OF THE KING

More playable characters, new locations, huge improvements. Take an exclusive look… P48





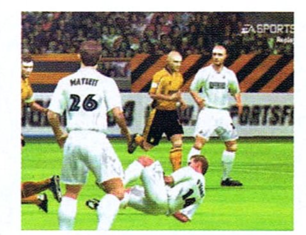
WORMS 3D

The annelids return with a new dimension and old favourites like exploding sheep and homing pigeons. Not interested? As the worms would say, "You'll regret that." P58



SSX3

The funky 'boarders hit the slopes with bigger runs, masses of extras and the chance to ride down the whole mountain. Get on-piste or be piste off. P60



FIFA 2004

Another year, another *FIFA* game. The last version was a splendid stat-stuffed monster, so *2004's* got a lot to live up to. The expert analysis kicks off on P64



BIONICLE

If you need any more proof that Lego should stick to making excellent brick-based playthings, this turd-based videogame should suffice. Lego, stop now! P66

PLUS

DRAGON BALL Z BUDOKAI

Up to *DBZ's* usual standard… P52

WALLACE & GROMIT

Is it Aardman? Yes and no… P62

GBA REVIEWS

No time to play at home? We've got *Final Fantasy Tactics Advance*, *Pokémon Pinball* and more for gamers on the go. P68

HOW IT WORKS...

Our reviews are the most comprehensive on Earth. We devote more pages to the games you want to know about, and give you loads of detail. We don't rest until we've played a game enough to pinpoint ALL of its strengths and weaknesses, and be able to deliver the most honest, no-nonsense verdicts around.



THE SIMPSONS HIT AND RUN

The tale of an ordinary family who, influenced by *GTA*, start on the violence and reckless driving and produce a decent game for once. P54



BILLY HATCHER AND THE GIANT EGG

Billy's turned out to be brilliantly loopy egg-rolling fun. There is no spoon. P74

OUR SCORING SYSTEM

0-24

Crushingly awful, massively dull. Rest assured, this is crud.

25-49

Disappointing, stashed with faults and likely to be short on any quality.

50-74

Some great bits, some not-so-great bits. Decent but definitely problems.

75-89

Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed.

90+

NGC STAR GAME

Rarely awarded, you'll know a 90+ is essential. Buy with confidence…

THE SCORE BAR

The verdict explained for you…

PROS AND CONS
Because we think it's important to provide you with balanced reviews, we'll sum up the game simply with some plus and minus points.

IF YOU LIKE THIS…
Not all games are good (unsurprisingly) – so you'll be wanting to know what the alternative is. We'll provide suggestions here.

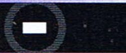
VISUALS AND SOUNDS
Gamecube sends PS2 packing. Do the visuals and sounds show this?

MASTERY
How well does the game make use of the Cube's startling hardware?

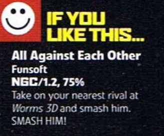
LIFESPAN
Will it last you a lifetime or a couple of minutes? Here you'll find out for sure…

VERDICT
We don't throw scores around – we give a game what it deserves. Here you will find the definitive verdict as to whether you should bother purchasing a game.

+
- Fun.
- It winds him up.
- Increases our chance of success.



–
- He usually wins at *Worms* anyway.
- That's about it, really.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
All Against Each Other
Funsoft
NGC/1.2, 75%
Take on your nearest rival at *Worms 3D* and smash him. SMASH HIM!



8 VISUALS
The look on his face when we kill his worms is priceless.

3 SOUNDS
Homicidal cackles of delight when he beats his last rival.

10 MASTERY
The man's a Worm-controlling monster. He's undefeatable.

5 LIFESPAN
Getting beaten ALL THE FREAKIN' TIME is a a *little* irritating.

VERDICT
All Against Kittsy is great fun, until we realise that our combined forces still cannot defeat him. Bah!

NGC 78



MEET THE NGC TEAM

Halloween's only days away and the team are preparing for some fun.



MARCUS
Marcus is a stressed bunny – he's spent months building a monster and now there won't be a storm. "Can you lend me a Van Der Graaf generator?"



PAUL
"This Halloween I shall be wearing a single strategically-placed pumpkin, thereby giving a treat to anyone who visits me." Now that's scary.



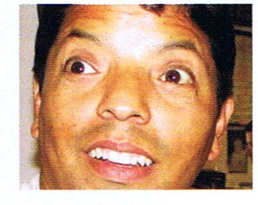
KITTSY
Some people put fake gravestones on their lawns. We're not sure where Martin got his from, but taking the coffins too was a bit much.



GERAINT
Bizarrely, it was almost impossible to take a decent photo of Ger this month. And he doesn't ever seem to get any older. Hmm…



MIM
Mim is going on a Goth holiday for Halloween. As you do. To Whitby. As you do. Still, at least she won't scare any trick-or-treaters this year.



EFRAIN
As he's descended from Aztecs, we're not encouraging Effy to dress up and scare people. We prefer our hearts inside our chests.



△ On the Pelennor Fields, the carcasses of giant Mumakil provide a stunning, probably smelly, backdrop.

△ Deal enough damage to enough enemies at once and hey presto, Perfect mode! Best kill some more orcs, eh?

△ Road To Isengard takes you through Fangorn and almost to the tower of Orthanc itself. Ace.

GET INTO THE GAME

Start with the Master of Magic...

SIMPLY WIZARD

The very first level, naturally, is a good introduction to the rest of the game. Overlapping with events in The Two Towers, *it's set at the fortress of Helm's Deep and you play Gandalf as he helps save the day (something you couldn't actually do in* The Two Towers *game as you were limited to playing as Aragorn, Legolas or Gimli).*

Clear instructions tell you about the different types of attacks, blocking and how to use various objects – and then, helpfully, what you can do with the experience points you earm, which in turn feeds into how to use the combos and various special abilities. From here you can then choose which of the three character-specific paths to take through the game proper. We'd start with Gandalf as his path is an interesting one and you'll already have a feel for his controls.



△ Osgiliath is brilliant – the men of Gondor fight off the invading orcs, and you've got to avoid the ring-preying Nazgûl who swoop overhead on Fellbeasts. It's just like the end of the book The Two Towers.



△ Sam must sneak through Cirith Ungol and rescue Frodo. Luckily, the goblins and Uruk Hai are fighting…



△ Look at it! Like a fairy-tale forest, but scarier, and with more wizards.



△ Grab nearby torches to burn away the webs in Shelob's Lair.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	EA
RELEASE DATE	7TH NOV
PLAYERS	1-2
MEMORY CARD PAGES	6
GBA LINK-UP	YES
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE RETURN OF THE KING

One game to rule them all! EA return to form with this ring-blinder of an orc-slasher…



Not since *GoldenEye* has a film license been used to such devastatingly entertaining effect. Really. *The Return of the King* is an often breathtaking evocation of what's at the heart of The Lord of the Rings; namely, a ruddy great war full of spectacle and danger and jaw-to-the-floor thrills. It can be absurdly exciting, and for a game that is really, at heart, nothing more than a polished *Gauntlet* clone, that's high praise indeed.

Following the format established by last year's *The Two Towers*, *The Return of the King* sees you hacking and slashing your way through hordes of goblins and Uruk Hai. And while *RotK* sometimes falls prey to the faults that plagued its predecessor – namely, all the combat can get a little repetitive – it is altogether bigger and better and much, *much* more impressive.

"AN OFTEN BREATHTAKING EVOCATION OF WHAT'S AT THE HEART OF LORD OF THE RINGS"

For a start, repeatedly stabbing the same attack button simply doesn't cut it any more. There's an elegance at work in the game design that means such simple behaviour will only get you so far. In short, fighting with skill earns you experience points that you can trade in for combos and special abilities. You're rated on each kill; doling out big damage without being hit yourself guarantees you a better rating. And if you manage to consistently kill enemies with, say, an 'excellent' or (you'll be lucky) 'perfect' rating, you'll swiftly rack up points to spend and your character will also go up a level, allowing access to new abilities. It's RPG-lite stuff, maybe, but it works brilliantly. Timing your attacks and using combos successfully is the key to good ratings (and survival), and as well as this, different enemies require different approaches: you'll need to smash shields with a Fierce attack before you will be able to hurt what's behind them, for instance.

Of course, it's tricky to concentrate fully on doing all of this when the sheer sensory





LORD OF THE LINK-UP

Return of the King offers modest link-up options with the GBA. Connect to the GBA RotK and you can snaffle 1000 upgrade points per completed level, which is handy for buying combos, new abilities and suchlike. It's not in the league of Wind Waker or Metroid Prime, but it's something.

DID YOU KNOW? Tolkein wrote The Lord of the Rings partly because England has no folk legends of its own, due to the Norman conquest wiping them out.

"EA have thought epic"

BAD GUYS
Expect to be swamped in enemies for practically all of the game.

TALENT SHOWS
Expand your move repertoire by spending experience points on combos and abilities that increase your ability to deal damage. Simple.

GOOD CHARACTER
You fight initially as Gandalf, Aragorn or Sam. Later you can play as pretty much any of the main players – and there are secret heroes to unlock.

SCENE THAT
All the major locations of the film are represented, from the besieged Gondor to the Paths of the Dead to the Black Gate of Mordor and, yes, even the Crack of Doom itself…

DEAD GOOD
As Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas fight their way through the Paths of the Dead they'll come across a sinister boss-type character. Aragorn must fight him alone and best him to convince him and his undead to join them against Sauron…



overload present is doing its best to fry your synapses. EA have thought epic with *The Return of the King*. You're pitched directly into Helm's Deep as Gandalf, swinging from battlements, scything down legions of Uruk Hai and using giant ballistas to howitzer the orcs storming the gates. From there you're flung into a magnificently atmospheric Fangorn Forest, fighting alongside the Ents as you press forward to Isengard, then you must stage a one-man defence of Gondor, and so it goes.

LOOK WHO'S TOLKEIN
Each level takes one high-octane moment from the film – battling undead warriors with Aragorn, rescuing Frodo from the monstrous spider Shelob as Sam – and builds an intense battle around it. And it is all masterfully directed. There's real drama here, with swooping camera shots and brilliantly timed events (after a gruelling defence of Minas Tirith's courtyard, for example, three enormous Cave Trolls burst through the gates) and the sense of place and atmosphere is palpable. Add some level-specific quirks, such as Frodo being corrupted by the ring at Osgiliath (which means, in gameplay terms, staying inside buildings where possible, as the Fellbeast-riding Nazgûl pinwheeling through the sky outside try to 'turn' the head hobbit) and the game couldn't try harder to emulate the character of the movies.

There are three different routes through the game, and they mirror the paths the three elements of the Fellowship take. Each route is, at first glance, disappointingly short – five levels or so – but each is unique to each group of characters, and once you've completed the game, you can take any character through any level. It's a great replay incentive, which is essential given how little time it takes you to play through the game the first time, and

> **"THERE'S DRAMA HERE, WITH SWOOPING CAMERA SHOTS AND BRILLIANTLY TIMED EVENTS. THE SENSE OF PLACE IS PALPABLE"**



EXTRA, EXTRA
***Return of the King** offers between-level goodies for you to watch, a little like DVD extras. There's a nice concept art showreel for a start, and small interviews with some of the principal players from the films, such as Ian McKellen, Christopher Lee and Elijah Wood. Plus some secret stuff too…*

CONTINUED ON P51…

THE SIEGE OF MINAS TIRITH

Sauron's sacking Gondor – and it's up to one wizard to stop him…



BEST DEFENCE
The first order of the day is to repel the attacking forces and keep the 'overrun meter' down – if this fills up, it's goodnight Middle Earth.



LADDERS
The Uruk Hai will try to scale your walls. Keep an eye on the battlement map and kick down any siege ladders that are put up. This requires much running about.



TOWERS
Bugger. The Orcs have got Siege Towers – if these get to the ramparts you'll be swamped. Luckily Gandalf has a ranged magical attack – use it to knock 'em down.



URUK HAI
You can't stop every orc getting onto the battlements, so you have to cut through them to fulfil the other objectives. This is a tough level, but rewarding.



△ **You have to knacker this troll before you can get through the Southern Gate leading to Gondor.**



△ **Sam's better at fighting than you'd think. We don't expect him to kill orcs in the film, mind.**



△ **Explosive materials will make your life much easier, as these collapsing archer-towers demonstrate.**

starting afresh with, say, a levelled-up Aragorn is a rare treat. A full-blown co-operative mode is present too, and while the game is engrossing for the single player, it really comes alive with a chum to share the fun. The unlockable characters and other extras provide further incentive to keep on playing, and the addictive high-score mentality of getting 'perfect' kills and racking up big points is undeniably beguiling.

MORDOR SHE WROTE

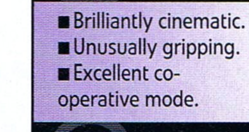
Naturally, there are problems. It's bloody hard, for a start. And as we've said, for all the excellence shown in the fighting system, and the sheer visceral impact of murderously wading hip-deep through Uruk Hai, the game simply gets repetitive at times. While the set-pieces are fist-in-the-air impressive, there are times when you'll simply tiresomely fight wave upon wave of uninspiring lesser enemies (the spiders in Shelob's lair spring to mind). And given the precision required for pulling off hassle-free combos, the roving camera annoyingly settles into some *Resident Evil*-esque angles that make it difficult to judge distance and timing. Trot up to the gates in the Minas Tirith courtyard and you'll see what we mean.

But we can't help but love *The Return of the King*. Possibly it's because we're so surprised by it; its simplicity is its strength, laser-focused for constant action, buttressed by honestly inspiring, enormously cinematic spectacle. This is a success, then, and one that thoroughly deserves to be played.

JES BICKHAM

USE ME

Littered around most of the levels are various objects that you can use with a touch of the Z-button. These range from simple spears that you can throw to boiling braziers to tip over. You can even blow the living daylights out of fortified masonry with flaming ballista-shots. Marvellous stuff, and all very cinematic.



- Brilliantly cinematic.
- Unusually gripping.
- Excellent co-operative mode.



- Can get repetitive.
- Not as big as we'd have liked.
- Wilful camera.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
The Two Towers
EA
NGC/78 68%
Very much the template for *RotK*, but far less polished and not as exciting.



9 VISUALS
Cracking attention to detail. Like the film, but on your 'Cube!



9 SOUNDS
Superb soundtrack and voice-acting from the film.



8 MASTERY
Crowded screens mean occasional drops in frame rate.

7 LIFESPAN
Replayability is huge, but it's not quite epic the first time around.

VERDICT
A slasher elevated to something near true greatness by cinematic looks and simple-but-deep play mechanics. Sometimes repetitive but really thrilling.



NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING
86

"Can always be counted on to deliver a disappointing videogame"



△ It doesn't look half bad in some instances, but the controls and basic fighting system are really disappointing, making the game dull after a day or so.



△ Keep Raditz in the blue line so Piccolo can fry him with his beam.



△ Once you've worked through Story mode, there's no point playing.



△ There are loads of characters to unlock, but it's hard to see anyone…



△ …bothering after a while. They all play pretty much the same. (Badly.)





△ Well, what can we say? One of the many cut-scenes in the game that'll have you crying tears of laughter. The anime was never like *this* bad was it?

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	ATARI
DEVELOPER	BANDAI
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1-2
MEMORY CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



DRAGON BALL Z BUDOKAI

ANIMENIACS! Vegeta, Gohan and Goku return for yet another disappointing DBZ battler…

△ Your character can fly in a totally stodgy and cumbersome kind of way.

Good old *Dragon Ball Z*. The only license that can *always* be counted on to deliver a disappointing videogame. It's a long tradition that goes way back to the SNES days – and it's one that isn't likely to change with this latest effort.

Budokai, then, is a one-on-one fighter. In the main single-player Story mode, you take control of the hero Goku as the game loosely (and we really do mean loosely) follows the plot of the anime, which sees you trying to rescue your son. It's in Story mode that the game hits its first snag.

As a fighting game, *Budokai* falls flat at a number of basic hurdles. First off the controls are clunky. The characters move as though their feet have been dipped in concrete and the basic array of moves on offer is pathetic. It all feels so laughably dated that from the second you pick up the controller you just *know* there isn't going to be too much here to keep your interest. You'd be right. You can beat the game's Story mode in just one night's sitting. A pretty criminal state of affairs when you consider this is supposed to be the main bulk of the single-player experience. So it's left to the two-player Versus mode to keep the game alive.

Unfortunately, the poor fighting system becomes all the more apparent after you've fought against a human opponent. The workmanlike button combos for moves, combined with the rewards you get for putting in the very minimum effort, cause bouts to degenerate into tiresome games of smack-tennis as you batter out the same moves over and over again. The *one* thing we feel it has got going for it is that it made us laugh. We laughed for all the wrong reasons, mind. The Story mode's cut-scenes are so unintentionally amusing that your own mouth could very well snap off under the strain of laughter. *Budokai's* funny, yes, but that's hardly a reason to buy it.

GERAINT EVANS

> "FIRST OFF, THE CONTROLS ARE CLUNKY AND THE BASIC ARRAY OF MOVES ON OFFER IS PATHETIC"

+
- Kind of funny.
- Um… accessible?
- Er… hang on…
- Uh… ah, forget it.

–
- Very basic stuff.
- Over too quickly.
- Tedious multiplayer
- Waste of a license.

IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Soul Calibur 2
Namco
NGC/81 92%
The best fighting game ever made. Miss this one and you're an idiot.



4 VISUALS
Cel-shading taken to an all-new super-basic low. Nasty.

5 SOUNDS
Japanese voices and a hugely irritating rock soundtrack.

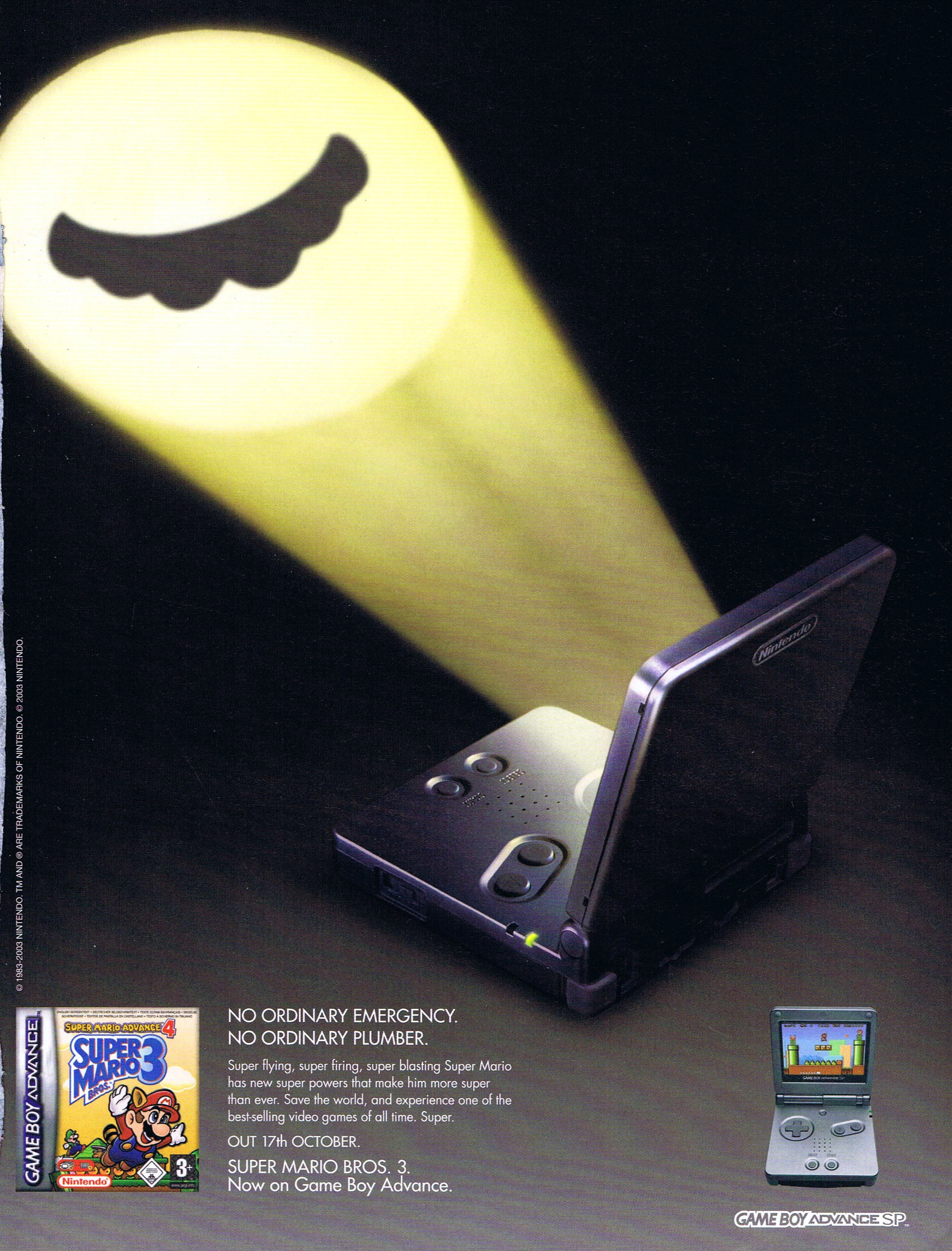
3 MASTERY
You're joking, right? Very basic in every possible aspect.

3 LIFESPAN
Rubbish. The single-player mode will be dead within a week.

VERDICT
A very poor attempt at a fighting game and an extremely cynical use of a quality license that will do nothing but irritate fans of the series. Avoid.



43


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Nintendo
GAME BOY ADVANCE
SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 4
SUPER MARIO BROS. 3
Nintendo
3+
NO ORDINARY EMERGENCY.
NO ORDINARY PLUMBER.
Super flying, super firing, super blasting Super Mario has new super powers that make him more super than ever. Save the world, and experience one of the best-selling video games of all time. Super.
OUT 17th OCTOBER.
SUPER MARIO BROS. 3.
Now on Game Boy Advance.
GAME BOY ADVANCE SP

"*Simpsons Hit & Run* hangs together surprisingly well"



Δ Bart's a little too young to buy a cool, refreshing Duff, but Moe will happily sell him fireworks. And why not? Share the fun, we say.



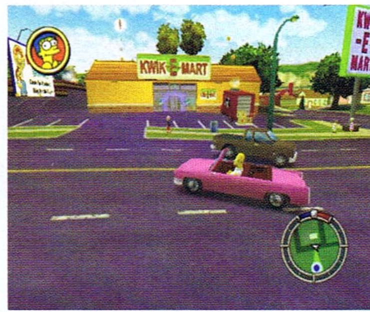
Δ Apu, one of five playable characters, prances around in downtown Springfield.



Δ Pork chops again, for the third time this week! I won't stand for it, woman!



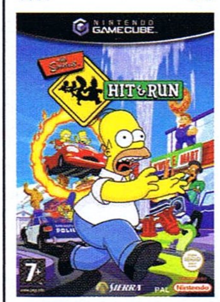
Δ You can flatten some obstacles with your bumper, while others are totally solid.



Δ Unfortunately you can't whip out a sawn-off shotgun and hold up the Kwik-E-Mart.



PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
DEVELOPER	RADICAL
RELEASE DATE	7TH NOV
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



THE SIMPSONS HIT & RUN

No, wait! This is the Simpsons game you might actually want to play. Oh, go on…



Having failed to set the videogame world on fire on many occasions (and even chuffed out a few utter stinkers from time to time), the last thing any of us expected to see was a Simpsons game that's actually any good.

But here it is. After unwittingly starring in turkey after miserable turkey, Springfield's best-loved residents now have a game that doesn't pour sugar in their car's petrol tank and urinate through their letterbox. So to speak.

That *Simpsons Hit & Run* hangs together surprisingly well is largely thanks to a thoroughly convincing model of Springfield. It's split into three areas (downtown, the suburbs and the outskirts), which allows for a huge amount of detail to be packed into each fast-loading segment.



COSTUME DRAMA

All characters have a selection of alternative outfits, which you can purchase for use in certain missions – or just to see how they look. They're all taken from the TV series and Simpsons buffs will have a puzzling time trying to remember exactly which episodes the funky clothes were featured in. Go for it, if you think you know your Simpsons…

Virtually every significant landmark from the Simpsons history is rendered up in 3D and placed in a coherent, logical way. Even though the TV series never dares bore the audience with the full details of, for example, Homer's drive from his house to his job at the nuclear power plant, it all makes perfect sense here, with everything placed exactly where you'd expect it to be.

Springfield is populated by countless random pedestrians and the roads are filled with cars which, if you're short of a vehicle of your own, can be appropriated from their rightful owners with a simple tap of the Y-button.

You're free to go virtually anywhere you choose within the city segment you're currently exploring (the three areas are not actually linked by road),



THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN



The first decent Simpsons game?

BURGLARISER

Unfortunately you can't just enter any house in Springfield and have a snoop around. Only a few select locations have interior scenes.

FAMILIAR FACES

You'll recognise loads of Simpsons regulars among the masses of anonymous citizens in the city. And once you've found them, you can beat them up.



MISSIONS

Follow the arrows on the road to find somebody who'll give you a mission.



BADNESS METER

Each misdeed causes a yellow bar to be added to the circular meter here. Fill it all the way and the cops will be all over you before you know it.



RADAR ZONE

There's no map available to give an overview of Springfield. You'll have to make do with the partial map in the radar window, but the place is easy enough to navigate around without getting hopelessly lost, and there are plenty of signposts and landmarks to look out for.

and you can opt to follow the storyline or go off in search of bonus missions and lesser objectives. If you prefer, you can simply ignore the current objective and go for a joyride through the streets.

VICE TO SEE YOU

Basically, it's an extremely lightweight Simpsons version of *Grand Theft Auto*. Previous Simpsons titles have always borrowed from established, successful games, so it's no surprise to see the trick repeated once again. It's just the first time they've managed to get it anywhere close to right.

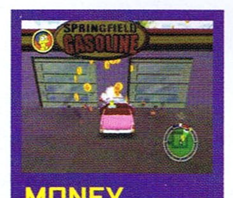
The plot is all about a conspiracy to sell Krusty's tainted cola, involving alien abductions and strange black vans.

Most major Simpsons characters pop up at some stage in the game, and you get to play as five of them – Homer, Bart, Lisa, Marge and Apu. Each character gets a run of seven story missions in one particular area, before the next character's missions become available in a different area. Bart and Homer get two cracks at it, making a total of seven stages to the game. To enter a mission you first have to find the character you're supposed to talk to. Easy enough, as green arrows on the roads point the way. After a short cut-scene, the mission commences, and if there are no special requirements (such as getting a particular costume or vehicle), you're dropped straight into the action.

There's a very limited selection of mission types, all of which involve collecting items, racing other characters or a combination of the two, but the lack of variety is disappointing. We played through the game hoping to see something slightly different, but as it turns out, the very first stage contains pretty much everything you can expect to experience in the next six levels. Concentrate on the Story mode and you'll have it licked in no time.

But what makes it a decent game is the amount of stuff happening elsewhere, away from the main

> **"VIRTUALLY EVERY LANDMARK FROM THE SIMPSONS HISTORY HAS BEEN RENDERED UP IN 3D"**

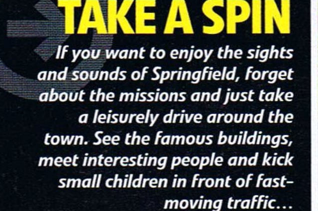


MONEY, MONEY, MONEY

There are no financial rewards for helping people out and completing missions. The only way to earn cash is by smashing stuff – boxes, vending machines, lamp posts, trees, lorries… The more things you demolish, the more dosh you'll have to spend on fast cars and designer clothing. Misbehaviour rules.

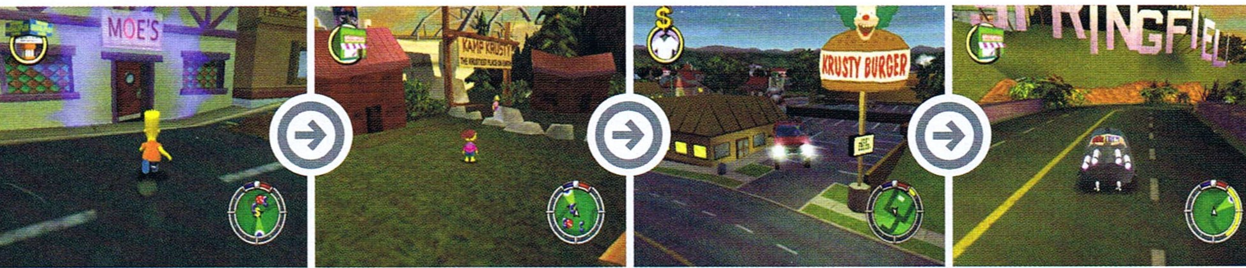


"The more people you attack, the more amusing taunts you'll get to hear"



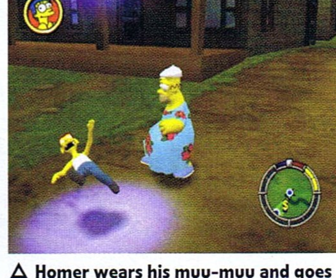
TAKE A SPIN

If you want to enjoy the sights and sounds of Springfield, forget about the missions and just take a leisurely drive around the town. See the famous buildings, meet interesting people and kick small children in front of fast-moving traffic…

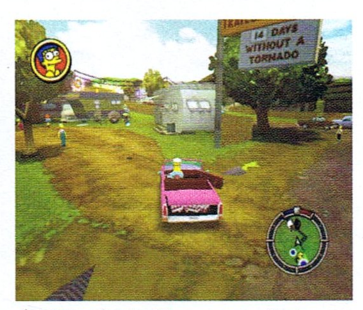




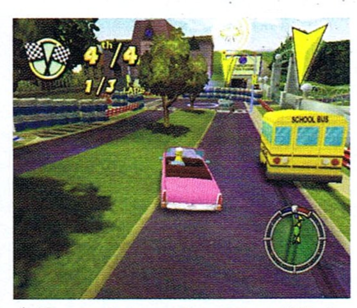
△ You can't order energy-giving food from Apu. A missed gameplay opportunity there.



△ Homer wears his muu-muu and goes redneck-stompin' at the trailer park.

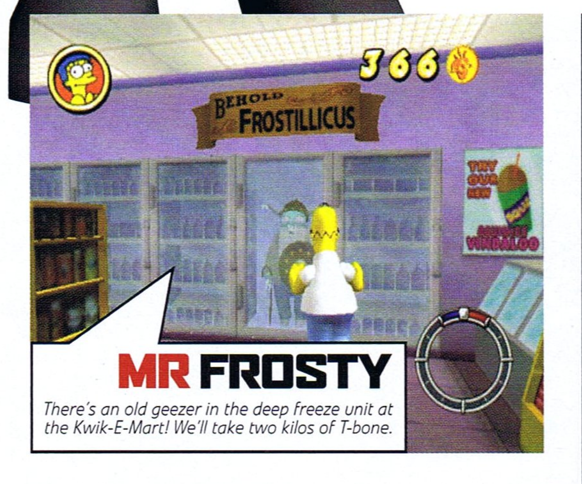


△ Springfield's pikey community in their natural habitat, by the tyre dump.



△ You can hop out of the car and hijack a school bus, if the mood takes you.





MR FROSTY

There's an old geezer in the deep freeze unit at the Kwik-E-Mart! We'll take two kilos of T-bone.

missions. There are jokes to hear, minor races to be won and ongoing sub-quests involving locating hundreds of robotic spy cameras and Simpsons memorabilia cards.

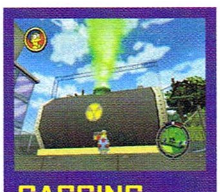
These items are scattered all over the place, in back yards, down alleyways and on high-rise rooftops. There's a huge amount of legwork to be done if you want to find them all, and a special episode of Itchy & Scratchy to watch once you've managed it.

HOMER SICK

There's also a lot to be said for the simple pleasure of making the Simpson family behave appallingly badly. Each character has a couple of attacking moves, which are only supposed to be used for kicking the spy cameras or breaking money crates while on foot. But they're very handy for venting your frustration on the good citizens of Springfield, and delivering justice wherever justice is needed.

Homer has a sort of happy fat man's kicking move, which is fantastic for booting lardy old Chief Wiggum off the pavement and into moving traffic. Marge's somewhat more vicious technique makes it look like she's thrusting her heel into the face of the poor guy she's just reversed over in her people carrier. Being much smaller and younger, Lisa and Bart carry less weight, but they can still boot small fry like poor, simple Ralph Wiggum clean off the ground.

The assaulted citizens roll around on the floor, wearing horrified expressions and flailing wildly until they regain their balance or get hit by a car. And the more people you attack, the more amusing taunts and comebacks you'll

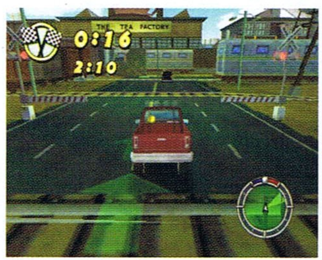


GAGGING ORDER

There are several 'gags' hidden in every level. These are objects which, if you press the Y-button in front of them, will burst into life with a short bit of animation and maybe a few lines of jokey dialogue. You have to find them all if you want a 100% rating, so keep an eye out for anything that looks out of the ordinary.

MISSION YOU ALREADY

Four (count 'em) types of gameplay!



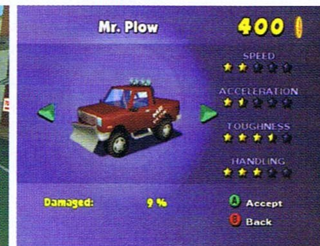
First we have the basic road race type of mission. You have to hit checkpoints as you drive, so don't take your eyes off the road to enjoy the sights.



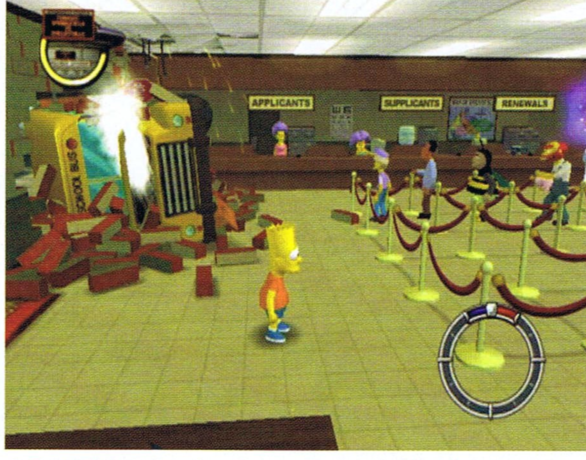
Then there are the missions where you have to collect stuff within a time limit. It usually takes a couple of attempts to figure out the best route.



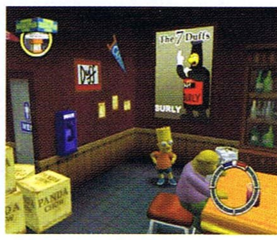
This one involves following a vehicle and collecting the items it drops as it bombs around the town. You might have to hit the vehicle to get it to drop the goodies.



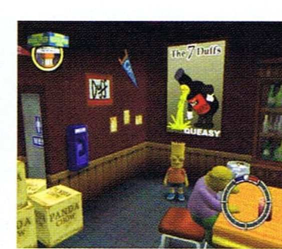
And finally there are missions that are all about wrecking target vehicles, such as black limos or sinister pizza vans. Find a big truck and smash them up.



△ Bart didn't park the bus there, unfortunately. Nice thought though.



△ Watch out for high-class visual comedy all over the place.



△ There he goes – bleeeuurgh! Ho ho ho! Bleeeuurgh! Wahey!



△ Tap the brake button to get into a four-wheel powerslide. It's by far the best way to get around the mean streets of Springfield.



△ Collecting static monkeys icons from around the town square. And why not?



△ One of Bart's idle animations in full effect. Looks like he's biting the road.

get to hear, which will only encourage you to do it all the more.

Sometimes violence is unavoidable, such as when you're racing through busy areas trying to keep up with another vehicle, but no matter what the reason, every act of badness adds to your wanted level. Eventually a couple of police cars are dispatched to teach you a lesson, and they'll slap you with a $50 fine for your crime spree.

BRAIN-CLOUD

A good portion of the artificial intelligence in the game (including the police chases) isn't great. The only time the cops will ever catch you is when you're concentrating on a mission objective, in which case the interruption is likely to make you fail in your task.

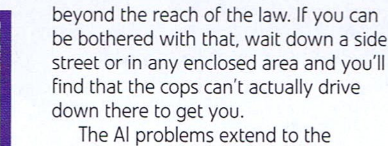
Any other time, simply taking a single shortcut is enough to put you far beyond the reach of the law. If you can be bothered with that, wait down a side street or in any enclosed area and you'll find that the cops can't actually drive down there to get you.

The AI problems extend to the missions too. On one level in which we had to hit a black limo until it was destroyed, the target car drove down a ramp onto the beach, and was unable to get back up. We watched for about a minute as it repeatedly rammed into the walls. Then it exploded.

Flaws like this would be hard to excuse in most other games, but for some reason *Hit & Run* remains a barrel of laughs. It's not like you'd expect Springfield's drivers to be particularly competent anyway.

This game has fantastic voice acting, a quality script and a huge map of Springfield that's packed with humour and begging to be explored. Fans of the TV show – and we'd assume that probably includes the majority of **NGC** readers – will find few causes for complaint. It isn't the greatest videogame ever, but it's definitely one of the funniest.

MARTIN KITTS



"IT ISN'T THE GREATEST VIDEO GAME EVER, BUT IT'S DEFINITELY ONE OF THE FUNNIEST"



WIFE BEATER

You wouldn't have thought a churchgoing man like Homer could be capable of such a thing, but we've witnessed him kicking Marge all the way across his front lawn and out into the street. Whereupon she was struck by a school bus and two cars, before ending up wedged under the wheels of a dustbin lorry. Homer was wearing a dress at the time of the assault.



- Great characters.
- Convincing 3D version of Springfield.
- Funny script.



- Repetitive missions.
- Dumb AI cars.
- If you're not a fan, don't bother with it.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Simpsons Road Rage
Acclaim
NGC/68 52%
Fairly Duff(!) attempt to fuse Simpsons characters with *Crazy Taxi* gameplay.



7 VISUALS

Nice and smooth, but the screen does tear a bit when moving.

8 SOUNDS

Loads of voices and some genuinely amusing dialogue.

6 MASTERY

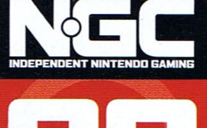
It could have done with some more variety, we think.

7 LIFESPAN

There's an Itchy & Scratchy episode to unlock at the end.

VERDICT

Far from original, and somewhat lacking in variety, but definitely the best Simpsons game ever by a very long way. Jebediah would be proud.







DID YOU KNOW? Bart always has nine spikes in his hair. Except when he's in 3D, in which case he has a bizarre sort of crown made from yellow putty. We think.

"The multiplayer game remains the most important feature"



△ One of the solo missions – just you, unarmed, against a gang of bullies.





△ Explosions eat huge holes in the terrain and make worms nice and crispy.



△ You'll believe a worm can fly! And it can, when propelled by a massive charge of dynamite. Other mad, bad and dangerous close-quarter weapons include the ninja-style fire punch and the trusty proximity mine.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	SEGA
DEVELOPER	TEAM 17
RELEASE DATE	31ST OCT
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	10
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40

WORMS 3D

Super Smash who? Your new favourite multiplayer game wriggles onto Gamecube…

△ Solo levels can be unlocked for multiplayer gaming.



△ Two worms, one king-size stick of TNT. This isn't going to be pretty.



△ Shotgun? Bazooka? Dynamite? Baseball bat? So many options…

NGC STAR GAME

Formerly the first and last word in multiplayer gaming, *Worms* was one of the few survivors from the 16-bit era to have been completely bypassed by the swanky 3D revolution.

But just look at it now, dressed up to the nines and cutting the most dashing of dashes as a debutante in a scene where even Mario and Sonic are weary, battle-hardened 3D veterans.

That it plays a game so remarkably close to the tight, strategic, highly skilful action of the original is a testament to the designers' decision to delay *Worms 3D* until console technology had evolved sufficiently to do it justice.

And it works beautifully. The game is essentially turn-based strategy mixed with a spot of platforming, in which your team of soldier worms attempts to blast the hell out of up to three rival teams, using wind-affected artillery or a collection of bizarre weapons.

Each worm gets around one minute to survey the battlefield, move to an advantageous location and take a single shot at the opposition. Then it's the next team's turn, during which you can only hope that they can't land a cluster bomb in the middle of a vulnerable group, or use the wind to curl a bazooka shell right down your carefully prepared hiding place.

Weapons such as exploding cows, exploding sheep and threadbare homing pigeons (which explode) add visual humour and do big damage but, as with previous instalments, the game is at its most satisfying using the most basic implements.

The new dimension means it's much harder than before to figure out where to aim, taking into account the wind and gravity, but the Tutorial mode is thorough enough to give good training in all the basics.


△ This navy battle solo level is brilliant. Use your parachute and float between the aircraft.


△ After using a weapon you have a brief time (you can set how long) to move to a safe place.


△ Jetpacks are cheap, but sometimes the only way to end a battle that's outstayed its welcome.

EXTREME PREJUDICE

Wipe that smirk off your face, soldier. What kind of worm are you?



RANDOMISER

Not happy with what you're given? Everything can be changed, from the game rules to the type of weapons you have. Even the levels can be randomised.



INHUMANE

It's a doddery old lady, reeking of toxic urine and packed with explosives. Who said anything about the Geneva Convention? You know you want to…



BATTER UP

Of all the original weapons, the most satisfying is still the good old baseball bat. Line them up and send them flying into the sea. One hit, one kill. Sorted.



WMD

Not skilled enough to score a hit with a proper weapon like the bazooka or grenade? Simply call in an airstrike or drop a nuke. The easy way out.



GO RETRO

Switch to the overhead view and lower the camera as far as it will go if you want something fairly close to the old 2D view. Good for long-range aiming.



OLD ROPE

You'd be lucky – using the ninja rope is doubly difficult in 3D. Other returning gadgets include parachutes, girders, teleports and exploding sheep.



SHOOTERS

Weapons which aren't affected by the wind, namely guns and blowpipes, have a kind of wobbly sniper view in the first-person mode. Makes things fairer.



THE PERSONAL TOUCH

Nothing says 'I really do care' more than a hands-on approach to Wormination. Break out those karate skills or simply prod your enemy into the water. Aww.

There's a big one-player mode, with a mixture of battles and *Pilotwings*-style challenges, but the multiplayer game remains the most important feature. Getting a few friends round for a tournament using your own custom worm teams is as much fun as any four-player experience on Gamecube. You'll argue over which rules to play by, you'll get incredibly narked when your mates decide to gang up on you because you've just won three rounds in a row, and you'll want to chuck the controller across the room when your carefully planned shot winds up blowing back into your worm's face because you misread the wind meter. But you'll love every minute of it.

"WEAPONS SUCH AS EXPLODING COWS, EXPLODING SHEEP AND THREADBARE PIGEONS ADD HUMOUR AND DO BIG DAMAGE"

Our only real gripe is that it's very easy to traverse the levels using the worms' super-powered jumping ability. So rather than test your skill with long-range weapons, you can simply hop all the way over to an opponent and get him from point-blank range. In previous games, getting all the way across a level called for expert use of ninja ropes and parachutes, and was worth the easy kill you got at the end. Now it's easier to get a cheesy win.

Also, the vagaries of a 3D camera system mean that you sometimes don't get to see exactly where your shot landed, and because of the amount of memory required to store the fully deformable landscape, there's now no replay option. Small things, really. *Worms 3D* is a four-player game that's the equal of any other on Gamecube. We suggest you buy it now.

MARTIN KITTS



PLAYING IT NICE AND CIVIL, LIKE

The default weapon sets make it a little too easy to simply teleport and jetpack all over the landscape. We've found that switching off these items, reducing the turn time and limiting some of the more powerful weapons is best for truly competitive multiplayer battles.



- Classic multiplayer.
- Solo missions.
- Random levels.
- Massive fun.



- Shots can be hard to judge.
- Some weapons are too easy/powerful.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Mario Party 4
Nintendo
NGC/75 68%
Four-player fun, although not quite as good as *Mario Party 2* for the N64.



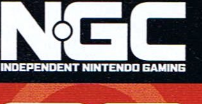
8 VISUALS
Solid and colourful. Some of the preset levels look fantastic.

8 SOUNDS
More speech options than you'll ever need. Loud theme song.

9 MASTERY
A storming 3D update of one of the great 2D games.

9 LIFESPAN
Few multiplayer games can compare to this. It'll last ages.

VERDICT
Excellent in every way. It's *Worms* in 3D, and if you loved the previous versions you're going to be blown away by this. A multiplayer must.


NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING


90

"*SSX3* improves over *SSX Tricky* in every conceivable area"

TOTAL INSANITY

And you thought the courses in SSX Tricky were mental? These really take the biscuit. Huge death-defying leaps, near vertical descents, interactive scenery and some absolutely stunning mountain vistas. Brilliant.



TRICK METER

Just like before, the more tricks you pull off, the more this meter fills up. Performing tricks allows you to use this meter to speed up your descent, and the faster you go, the higher you jump and the more tricks you can pull off.

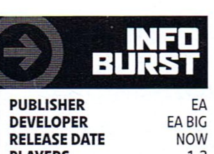


CHARACTERS

No doubt EA went to a lot of effort to make the characters (ahem) 'cool', but you have to wonder what they were thinking when making the loading scenes. In one Kaori is in the back of a plane being carted up the mountain. For 10 seconds you watch 'Princess Dumbass', as she waves her arms around like a gibbon at a Girls Aloud gig. Radical.

RIVALS

You need to beat them obviously, but if you fancy a spot of on-piste fisticuffs, then go ahead. Be careful though; hit them too much and they'll have you ear-marked for more of the same… and that could seriously spoil your descent.



PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	EA BIG
RELEASE DATE	NOW
PLAYERS	1-2
MEMORY CARD PAGES	1
GBA LINK-UP	YES
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES
COST	£45





SSX3

Get a piste of the action! EA create one of the most thrilling rides the 'Cube has to offer…



We never thought the day would come when EA drastically improved *anything*. Yeah, okay, so there was *FIFA 2003*, but that doesn't count. It took them ten long years to get that right.

SSX3 improves over *SSX Tricky* in every conceivable area. Not just tweaks either, but a pretty hefty reworking of the game's overall structure, along with some truly excellent new features.

More importantly, however, they've kept that essential *SSX* spirit throughout. You know, all that sickening hand waving, 'street' gesturing, bad-boy posturing, and ghetto trash-talking that makes us want to vomit into a big 'phat' bucket.

So… differences, then. Well, a bloody gutload if the truth be known. The first thing you'll notice is the 'free-roaming' nature of the game. It might not be *quite* as free-roaming as EA Big would have you believe, but the idea is definitely there…

SNOW-NONSENSE

When you start the game's main Conquer the Mountain mode, you begin at the top of a peak. In the background, a radio DJ fills you in on the events that are happening on the mountain and, sure enough, as you work your way down the opening sections, you find signposts to different races, big air events and suchlike. Competing in (and winning) these events earns you money, unlocks extra features and, eventually, new peaks on the mountain.

It's a wonderfully refreshing way of going about things. You can just cruise down the slopes at your leisure, if you fancy, simply participating in any challenges that present themselves or just practising new trick-lines that you happen to stumble across.

RACE PUDDING

The sense of scale this lends to the game is certainly impressive. Take an individual peak as an example. You have to complete each of the races there in three heats, and there are three races on each peak. Every race takes place on one-third of the whole peak – giving you plenty of time to familiarise yourself with the 'big picture'. When you finally finish all three races, you're on to the last challenge, which is a massive time trial

THE FULL MOUNTY

To get around the mountain you just have to ride to your destination. But you can also use the game's handy transport (like planes, for example) to help whisk you to specific areas. To give you an idea of just how big the mountain is, it takes about half-an-hour to ride from the top all the way to the bottom.

DID YOU KNOW? M.J. "Jack" Burchett built the first snowboard in 1929. He used a plank of plywood and attached it to his feet using some horse reins and clothesline.



Δ Pick up a trick boost and you'll be able to pull off more moves in the air, filling up your meter very quickly and giving you extra speed.



Δ As ever, the courses are ludicrously over the top, letting you smash through office buildings and leap hundreds of feet into the air.

PICK OF THE PISTE

A guide to the challenges that await...





RACES: *Remember SSX Tricky? It's the same deal here. A bunch of racers and you, hurtling down the course as quickly as possible. Victory proves very lucrative.*

BIG AIR: *Takes place on a short run, with loads of huge jumps for you to try to perform the sickest possible moves on before you finally hit the bottom.*







SLOPE STYLE: *Another short run with loads of rails, ramps and pick-ups. It's a like a snowy downhill Tony Hawk, and it's an excellent diversion from the races.*

THE MOUNTAIN: *Not strictly a mode, but a number of challenges on one huge run. You can accept on-the-spot challenges or time-trial the whole peak.*

+

- Absolutely huge.
- Seamless freeriding.
- Tons of modes.
- Exhilarating racing.

–

- Still not as smooth as the PS2 version.
- Some irritating inconsistencies.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

SSX TRICKY
EA BIG
NGC/69 87%
The only other boarding game of note on GC. Get *SSX3* instead though.

8 VISUALS
Colourful, lovely snow effects and inspiring scenery.

8 SOUNDS
A very pleasing mix of tunes and DJ-style babble throughout.

7 MASTERY
Poor design and frame rate in places. Impressive overall.

9 LIFESPAN
Huge challenging tracks, and plenty to tinker with.

VERDICT
Some annoying flaws, but it's still got the skills to pay the bills – and will keep you going until *1080°* arrives in November.







Δ You can ride freely around the mountain. Follow these signposts, however, and you'll come across...



Δ ...these competition areas. Just ride up to the gates and you'll automatically be entered into...



Δ ...a race. Win it over three heats and you'll claim a massive wad of cash to spend on extras.

down the whole peak in one seamless 15-minute run.

There's so much to see and do it's bordering (boardering?) on the ridiculous. There's the Style Slope mode, with insane collections of jumps, rails and half-pipes to abuse. Then there are the races against other 'boarders to compete in, and the lodge where you can customise your character with a huge selection of clothes to try on, attributes to tweak and music to compile. And, once you've fully opened up the game, you'll notice just how truly enormous the whole thing is.

"YOU CAN, IF YOU SO DESIRE, JUST CRUISE DOWN ANY OF THE SLOPES AT YOUR LEISURE"

Unfortunately it's not all as peachy as it sounds. While the individual sections of mountain are often breathtaking in terms of their steep turns and stomach-churning drops, further exploration of what they have to offer can lead to very frustrating results.

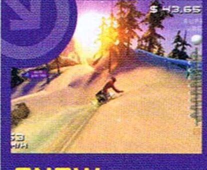
You see a gap in between the rocks, take it and see the track just meters below you, yet the game resets you with an 'Off Limits' chime. You try to cut off a cheeky section to save time... OFF LIMITS! You fail to make a jump, but you're still clearly on course for the track below... OFF LIMITS! You end up the wrong side of a tree lining the track... OFF FRICKIN' LIMITS! It's infuriating for a game that pretends to be so free-spirited.

Conversely though, you can sometimes find yourself missing a jump only to plummet for miles and up five places on the race standings. Being invited to try, and indeed trying, new things often leads to you being cruelly punished and that's unfair.

As long as you play by the game world's ambiguous rules though, you'll find a brilliantly enjoyable, often exhilarating downhill racer, whose grand ambitions clearly outshine its few shortcomings.

If it's large (and we do mean LARGE) volumes of fun for those long winter months you're looking for, then you'll find it right here.

GERAINT EVANS



SNOW BUSINESS

The environmental effects are particularly noteworthy in SSX3. Avalanches, whole faces of ice and rock crumbling from the sides of mountains, plane crashes knocking down trees, tumbling rocks rolling with you as you speed down the tracks – it all gives a fantastic feeling of involvement in the world around you. Brilliant stuff.

"Elastic-faced cheese muncher"



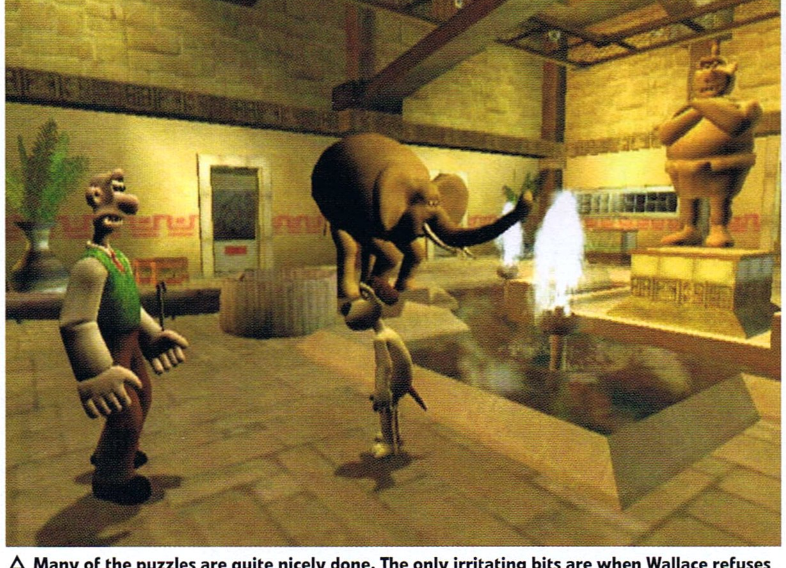
△ The gun uses the Predator's laser sight.



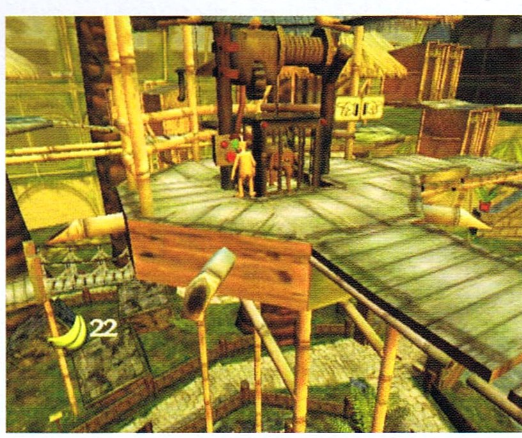
△ Ooh. A switch. Gromit looks well excited.




△ You can call over Wallace at any point to help you – if you're in a region where he can, he'll do it automatically. Which is nice.



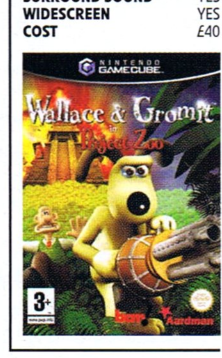
△ Many of the puzzles are quite nicely done. The only irritating bits are when Wallace refuses to follow you (after getting stuck in something) and the fiddly platforming sections.




△ Gromit's freeing a baby elephant that was caged by the evil Feathers McGraw. Well, as evil as a plasticine penguin can be.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	ACCLAIM/BAM!
DEVELOPER	FRONTIER/BAM!
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	4
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES
COST	£40



WALLACE & GROMIT IN PROJECT ZOO

It's not Aard, man… but it's a cracking platformer with some predictably cheesy moments.

It's so pleasant to receive a game that you expect to have to give a good kicking only for it to turn out to be – in the words of the elastic-faced cheese muncher – rather 'grand'.

With any game that focuses on a much-loved license, it's vitally important that it accurately reflects the characters and universe it's trying to emulate. In all fairness to Bam!, they've not only managed it with a pleasing level of grace, they've created a game that's surprisingly enjoyable.

The story itself is suitably Gromit-esque. On a trip to the Zoo to visit your adopted Polar Bear, you discover that Feathers McGraw, the penguin criminal mastermind, has taken control of the zoo and is wreaking havok among its residents. It's up to you, Gromit, and your assistant, Wallace, to put the world to rights.

Predictably, the game takes the form of a platformer but, as you'll notice after just a few minutes of play, it's quite an accomplished effort. The visuals are very crisp, the environments are detailed and expansive and the animation on everything is spot on.

Structurally though, the game isn't that inventive. You're given an area to explore. You have to collect nuts and bolts as well as specific items that Wallace can turn into gadgets. These gadgets allow you to open up more of the game's locations, as does solving the increasingly convoluted, but by by no means laborious (thanks to the game's generous saving system) puzzles. Nothing too surprising there, really. But it all potters along nicely enough.

Perhaps the only major problems we can find with the game are the often fiddly nature of some of the platforming tasks that you have to undertake and the fact that the subject matter and storyline may be a little too young for many gamers. If you're a Wallace and Gromit fan, though, there's a lot to enjoy here.

GERAINT EVANS



- Lovely crisp visuals.
- Smart puzzles.
- Stays faithful to its original subject.



- Wallace can get stuck sometimes.
- Some frustrating platforming sections.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Super Mario Sunshine
Nintendo
NGC/71 96%
Without a doubt the best platformer on Gamecube. And now it's only £20.





7 VISUALS
Surprisingly crisp with plenty of detail and sweet animation.

6 SOUNDS
Lots of speech and inoffensive music that's well suited.

7 MASTERY
Few glitches, but the levels and puzzles are tightly designed.

6 LIFESPAN
Decent size to it, but once beaten we doubt you'll play again.

VERDICT
It won't win any awards for originality, but as a platform adventure it does very little wrong. It's both entertaining and pleasing to the eye.

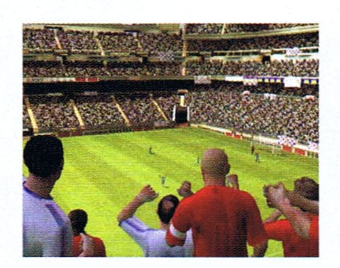


70


07:53. 7th December 1941.
In two minutes time,
paradise will be lost forever.
New mission coming soon.
MEDAL OF HONOR
RISING SUN
EA GAMES
Challenge Everything
PlayStation 2
You Don't Play, You Volunteer.™
mohea.co.uk



△ Hull City and Swansea getting down and dirty in a top-of-the-third clash. The game includes all the professional clubs in England, plus most of the top divisions for the rest of Europe. There's even a 'rest of the world' section.

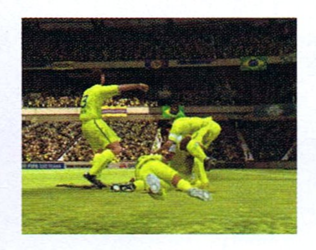




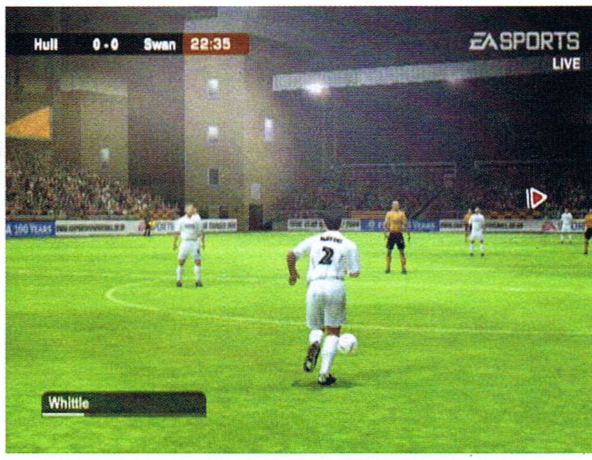




△ Sharpen up your free kicks on the training field. You have to mess around with loads of menus to change the kicker, which is annoying.



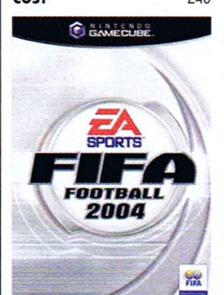




△ Select from several camera types, then adjust the height and zoom to suit your taste. We like it zoomed all the way back into Row Z.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	EA
RELEASE DATE	31ST OCT
PLAYERS	1-4
MEM CARD PAGES	20+
GBA LINK-UP	YES
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



FIFA FOOTBALL 2004

It wasn't broken but they've gone and fixed it anyway. EA's Tinkermen train up another championship-winning team...

There's something a little unsettling about a £40 game that only lasts a year. The 2003 version of this was the best so far, and remains perfectly playable, but now that the latest update has arrived, do you really want to load up the old one again? Of course you don't.

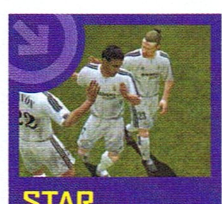
> "A THOROUGH REWORKING OF ONE OF THE BEST FOOTBALL GAMES, RECYCLING ONLY LAST YEAR'S BASIC FRAMEWORK"

All credit to Electronic Arts though. Inventing improvements that could make *FIFA 2004* seem like £40 well spent must have been a tough job, but gone are the days of minor tweakings and twice-yearly cash-ins. This is a thorough reworking of one of the best football games around, recycling only the basic framework from last year.

The first thing you'll notice when playing is that the default camera view is zoomed out much further than we're used to with *FIFA*, and can be pulled back even further until about a third of the pitch can be seen. This 'eye in the sky' view lends itself to a slower, more tactical sort of game, and consequently much of *FIFA 2004* is played at little more than walking pace. Hold the Z-button and you can make a player slow to almost a standstill, rolling the ball under his studs as you watch and wait to deliver the killer pass. Tap Z again and the camera zooms out further, displaying numbered icons above the players. Further taps cycle through the available players, allowing you to control them separately using the C-stick or send them on runs so you can deliver a through ball. This system works in one-player games because the computer tends to give you a few seconds of thinking time before tackling your motionless player. You'll be lucky to find an opponent willing to afford you such a luxury in a heated two-player game.

As a slightly more workable way to get your players running off the ball, you can hold Z and press the left shoulder button to make one of them dash into space. He'll raise his arm to let you know he wants the ball.

There's a great new free kick system, which works a bit like a golf game. You have to move a marker to determine where the ball will end up, set the spin,



STAR PLAYERS

From a distance virtually all the players look pretty much like they're supposed to, with generic faces matched to the correct skin and hair colours. Around 400 of them have been given the star treatment, with scanned faces giving an eerily 'realistic' look. It's like they've murdered the real stars, ripped out their skulls and players are wearing their dried skins like leathery masks. Creepy.




Call up a replay at any time. It's better than Sky Digital!



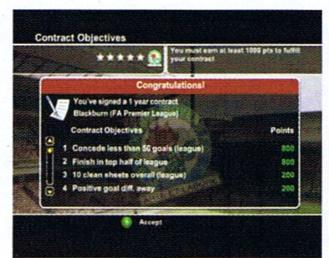
After selecting the type of corner kick you want, choose the player you're going to attack the ball with. Very unusual.



Since this was written before Man Utd played Rangers, we've no idea what the real score was. We'll take the game's word for it and put money on this, so if we're all on holiday next month...

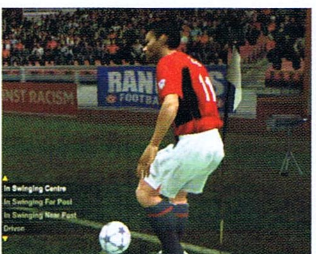
A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME

Kicking off a brand new season with the world's biggest sports sim...



CAREER MODE

Become the manager of a struggling club or take over one of the giants (and get sacked if you don't win the league). Weeks of management fun.



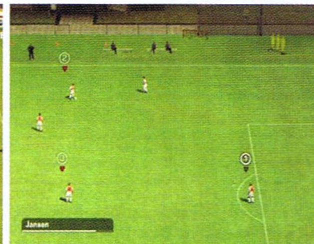
CORNERS

Select the type of corner from a menu, then choose which player you think has the best chance of reaching the ball. It's a minigame within a game.



OFF THE BALL

The Z-button activates Off The Ball mode (which EA has trademarked, curiously) and for new players the confusion begins here. Not a huge amount of use.



TRAINING

There's a brand new training pitch where you can practice those silky skills until your team is as slick as a well-oiled pig. The players get to wear nice red bibs.

then stop a power bar to hit it right on the sweet spot. Players like Beckham can score more often than not, whereas you'll have a hard time beating the keeper with lower-division cloggers.

Corner-taking is now done with menus rather than the normal controls. You can edit four type of corner within your saved profile before the game, and these are presented as options when you get a corner. You then select a player to receive the ball, and a brief minigame ensues in which you jostle with the defenders in order to reach the point where the ball is going to land. Get it right and you'll have a clear shot on goal. We weren't too keen on this bit, as it interrupts the flow of the game.

Behind the scenes, a new animation system makes *FIFA Football 2004* look much more fluid than previous games in the series. It's very convincing. One of the producers also told us that the Gamecube version has turned out to be the best looking of the lot, which is something to bear in mind if you own more than one console.

As you'd expect, there are plenty of new things to do away from the pitch. Career mode offers the chance to become the manager of any club you like, with a transfer budget to handle and players to train up.

Depending on how high you set your sights when choosing your first club, you'll be given appropriate targets for the season. A third division side might might be happy to reach the play-offs, while one of the bigger teams will sack you if you don't actually win something.

Other targets, such as conceding very few goals or winning a certain number of home matches, earn points which you can use to boost your standing in the transfer market. Getting rejected by a big-name player who refuses your advances will damage your reputation. Eventually you might get a job offer from a better club, and you can take your reputation with you when you leave.

The whole thing can even be played as a straight management sim if you don't want to play in the matches, although relying on tactics and team selection won't get you far when all your starting players are rubbish.

As football games go, it still doesn't play quite as well as Konami's excellent Japanese import *Winning Eleven*, but then nothing really does.

FIFA 2004 is an excellent game in its own right, with more than enough options to keep you playing for months. And though it pains us to say this, the official license really does make a big difference. All those real stadia, shirts and club logos flying around the place give it the kind of special event feel that the competition simply can't match. Shallow? Not us. Roll on 2005.

MARTIN KITTS

SCORES ON THE DOORS

With GBA link modes often being ways to get people to buy two versions of the game, it's good to see FIFA 2004 offer one that uses an empty GBA. Connect your link cable and, after a short period of downloading, the GBA becomes a scoreboard. Intriguing. But does it have a use? We've yet to find one, other than to wear down the batteries in a GBA. The scores are displayed on the main screen. Pointless?



- Loads of teams.
- Management.
- Career mode.
- Good free kicks.



- Clunky menus.
- Many features that most people will probably never use.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Winning Eleven 6 FE
Konami
NGC/79 93%
Only available on import, it's the best football sim on GC or anywhere else.



7 VISUALS
Good animation, slightly unsettling player death masks.

7 SOUNDS
Song snippets, crowd chants and typically foolish commentary.

8 MASTERY
Makes good use of the Gamecube and its controller.

9 LIFESPAN
It'll definitely last a year, until they bring out a better version.

VERDICT

Tactical football. It's the Serie A of soccer sims, and rewards those who spend the time to uncover its many subtleties. Give it a shot.

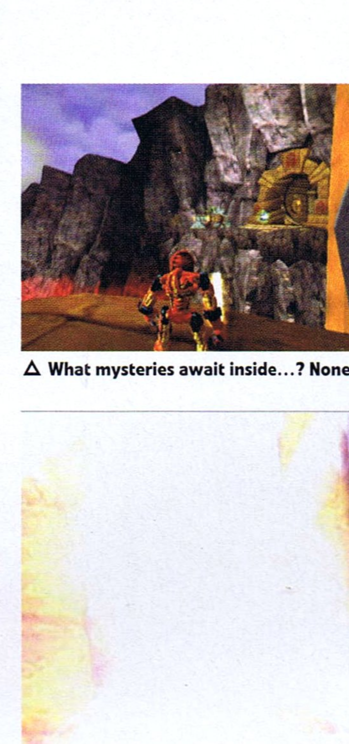




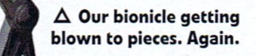
"Tedious, undiluted rubbish"



△ A Bionicle. Charging up his weapon.



△ What mysteries await inside…? None.



△ Our bionicle getting blown to pieces. Again.



△ Targeting mode – a confusing mess of a system that'll get on your nerves.

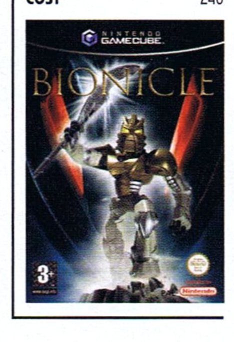


△ The worlds are so bland that disorientation is inevitable.

△ You fire finite blobs of energy at your targets. You can recharge your stock by absorbing enemy attacks.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	EA
DEVELOPER	LEGO
RELEASE DATE	7TH NOV
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	5
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£40



BIONICLE

Pathetic plastic platforming… Lego remind us that they *really* ought to stick to the bricks…

Sighing and shaking your head just doesn't do the feeling justice. You know, the despairing feeling you get when you're faced with something so utterly banal you wonder why the development team and publishers didn't throw in the towel long before the game was finished.

There really is no need for *Bionicle* – in game form at least – to exist. At its most basic level, the game itself is tedious, undiluted rubbish. We were hardly expecting great things, but we thought it would be at least half-way competent. It isn't. This free-roaming platformer's design is substantially flawed, with tasks ranging from the mind-numbing to the insanely difficult. Some sections on the very first level are fiddly and frustrating to say the least, with even simple jumps cause a pointless headache.

This is due mostly to an atrocious camera that's ludicrously indecisive about what it wants to show you. On more than one occasion, your Bionicle character is completely out of view. At other times you just have a screen full of the character model as you blindly run around, randomly stabbing at the X button in the vain hope that whatever it is that's shooting at you'll eventually be dispatched so you can 'explore' more of the utterly uninspiring landscape.

On top of this, the targeting system is completely wayward. You want to shoot at something specific, but the game won't let you. You want to leap onto a certain platform but, mid-jump, the camera decides to swing to an awkward position.

These are all problems that are present in a great number of games and, on some occasions, we can bring ourselves to forgive them. In this case however, we *can't*, as it presents players with absolutely no incentive to push further through the game. It's almost as though it's just been made for the sake of having a *Bionicle* branded game out there… hmmm…

GERAINT EVANS

> "AT TIMES YOU HAVE A SCREEN FULL OF THE CHARACTER MODEL AS YOU BLINDLY RUN AROUND, STABBING AT THE X BUTTON"



- It's sharp.
- Not as bad as *Batman: DT*
- …erm…

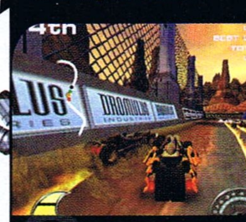


- Awful, unfocused level design.
- Terrible camera.
- So boring it hurts.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Drome Racers
EA
NGC/85 46%
More badly designed Lego-based rubbish that moves like a slug in a vat of salt.



5 VISUALS
Sharp, but poor textures and dull architecture ruin it.

4 SOUNDS
Uninspiring music and spot effects. Glitchy in places.

3 MASTERY
Master of *nothing* in all areas. A real underachiever.

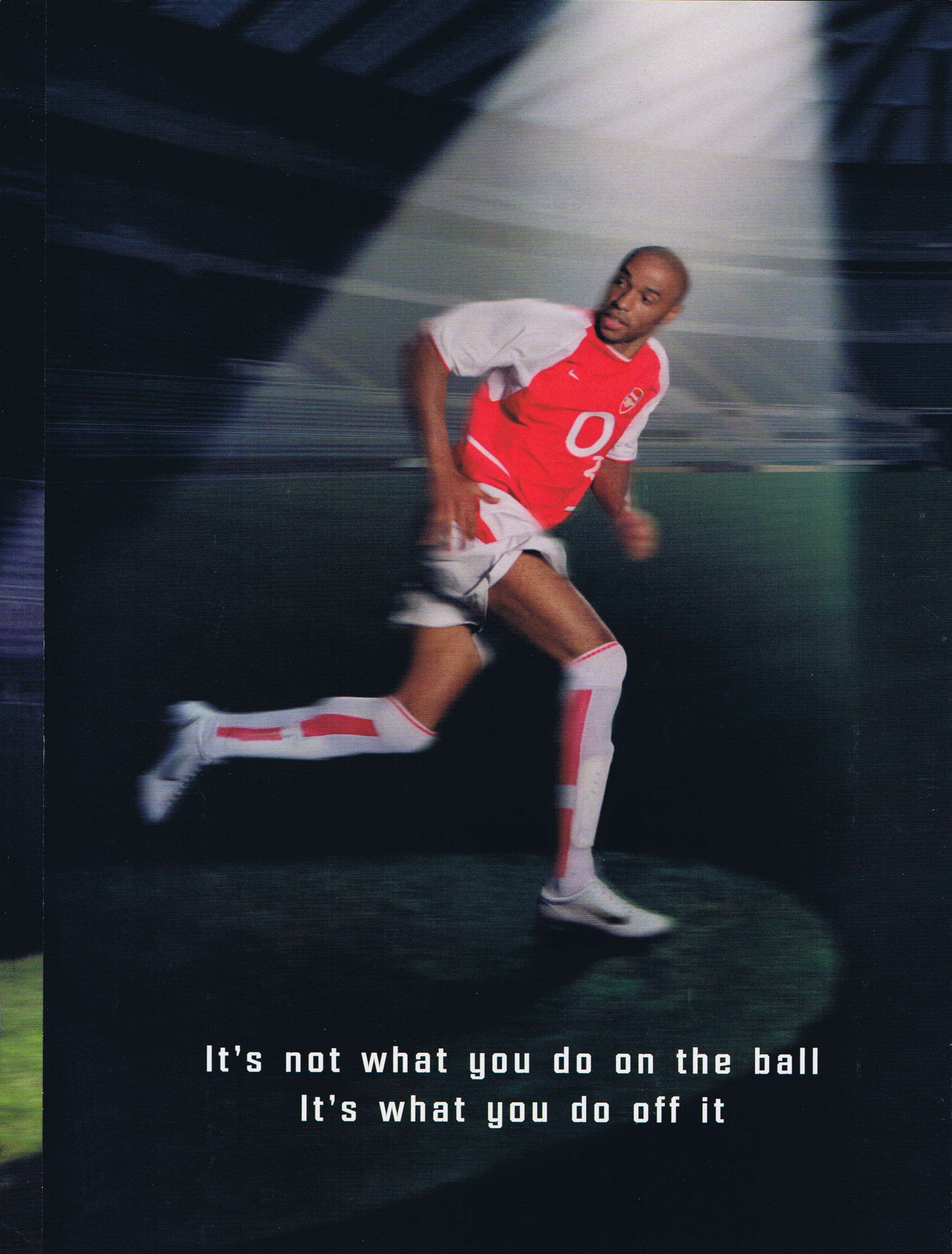
3 LIFESPAN
Foolish young children *may* consider playing it for a couple of hours.

VERDICT

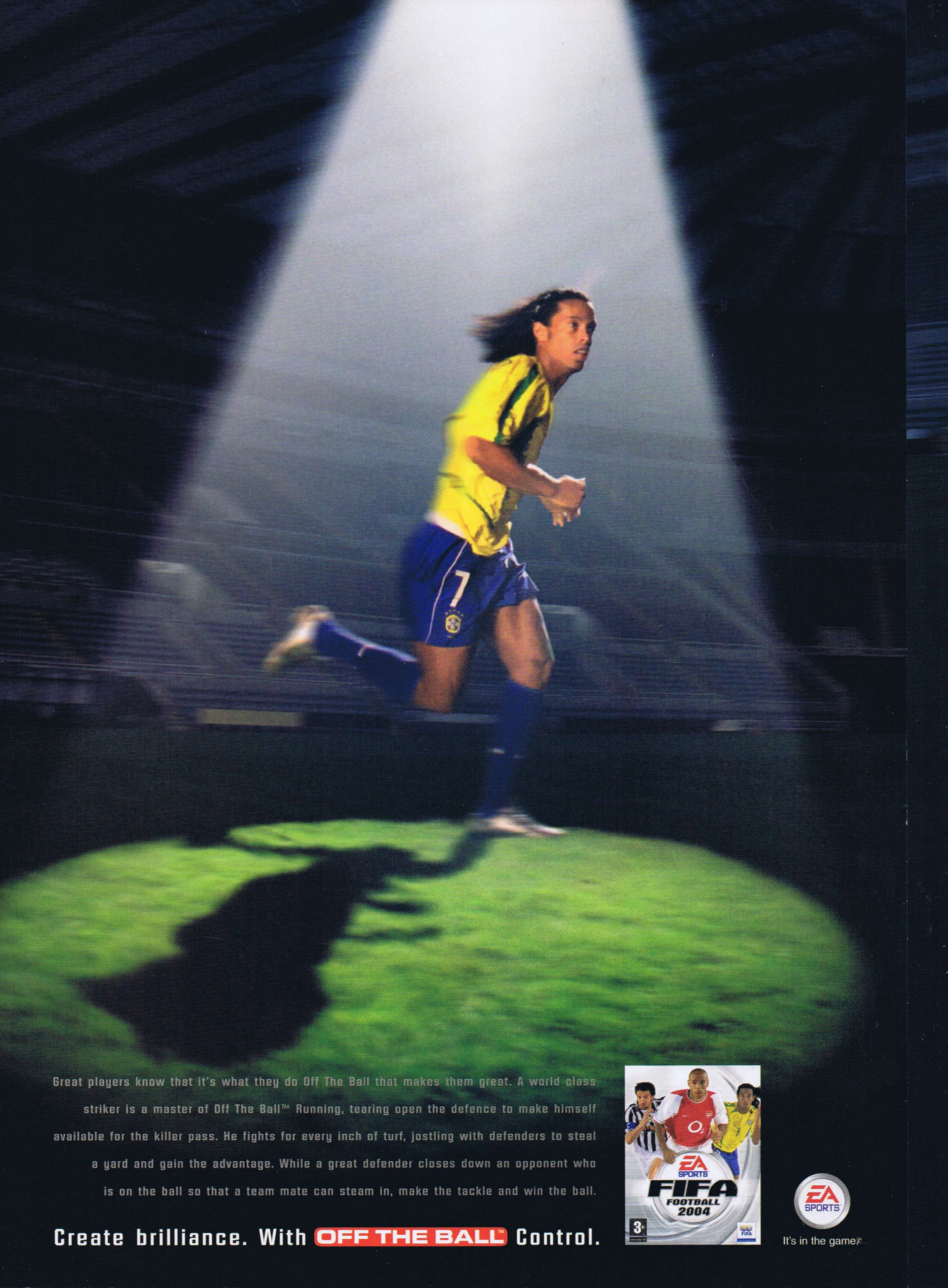
We've had bowel movements that are more enjoyable than this rubbish. Technically poor, terrible game design and intensely dull.



29


It's not what you do on the ball
It's what you do off it




Great players know that it's what they do Off The Ball that makes them great. A world class striker is a master of Off The Ball™ Running, tearing open the defence to make himself available for the killer pass. He fights for every inch of turf, jostling with defenders to steal a yard and gain the advantage. While a great defender closes down an opponent who is on the ball so that a team mate can steam in, make the tackle and win the ball.
Create brilliance. With OFF THE BALL™ Control.
EA SPORTS
FIFA
FOOTBALL 2004
3+
EA SPORTS
It's in the game.



△ The amount of jobs available is just silly.



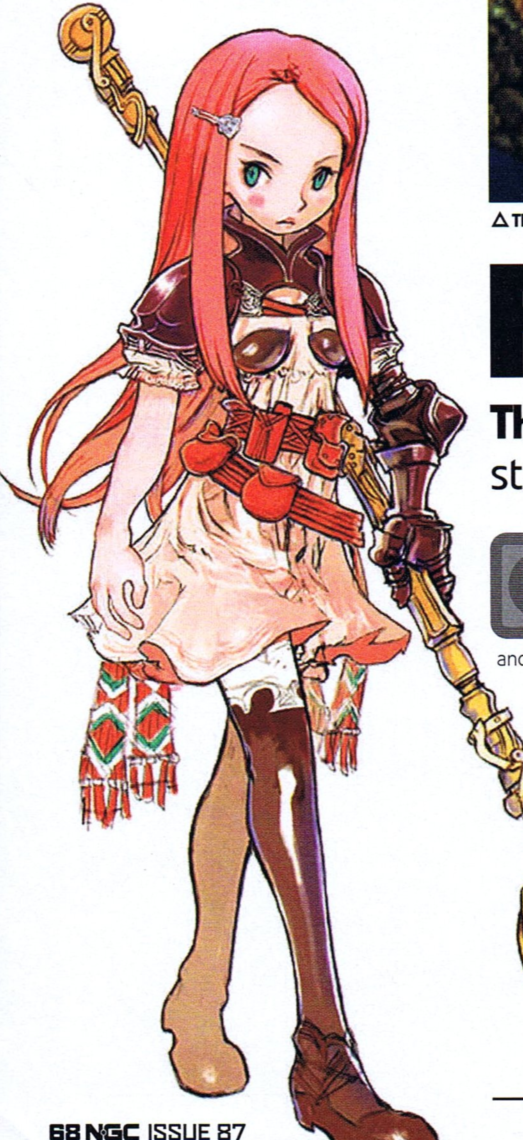
△ The opening sequences of the game take about half an hour to wade through.



△ This is the pub. There are many of these, and all of them are situated in the game's towns. Here you can buy missions to further the story.

FINAL FANTASY

The plot might be a bit 'Never Ending Story' (minus the stupid flying husky), but it's top strategy gaming all the same…



If you find turn-based battles as appealing as getting your genitals smashed with a steak hammer, *Final Fantasy Tactics Advance* will feel like a cruel and endless plum-crushing nightmare.

This isn't your common-or-garden plot-driven exploration epic. Instead it's a hard-nosed strategy marathon based entirely around isometric turn-based encounters with strict rules of engagement. True, there are many elements that tie this in with your standard RPG. Your characters 'level up,' for one thing, opening up new skills and increasing strength bonuses. Shopping is an integral part of improving your team (or 'Clan,' to use the game's own term) in order to increase capabilities and, of course, there is a plot (of sorts) that underpins all your activities – although, after half an hour of wading through the game's opening moments, it becomes clear that this particular aspect is total and utter rubbish.

KIDS ROCK

FFTA begins in the real world. Some school children… *(excuse me while I fetch a bucket – Ed)* open up an ancient book and … *(retch)* that same night our plucky band of kiddies is transported to an alternative game world that's… *(BLEUUURRRGH!)* based around the *Final Fantasy* universe… *(ooooh, carrots…)*. From here on in it's up to you to get back home.

It's hardly award-winning stuff, but get into the game proper and things start to perk up immeasurably. The game's central hub, as it were, is an overworld map – not too dissimilar from the one you'll find in *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*. From here you have access to the game's towns, where you'll find a shop and a pub. It's from the pub that the game takes form. The barman allows you to purchase missions for various prices and rewards. These missions have certain criteria and manifest themselves in specific locations.

Once you've bought up a set of missions you can then access them from the main map. It's here that one of the game's most interesting features takes place. After you've completed a certain mission, the game will ask you to place the next location on the map from a number of pre-set areas. In essence then, you can create the world map yourself, as different players will inevitably place different locations in different places on the main map. This



Δ Price lists vary between shops and towns, forcing you to shop around for cheap goods.



Δ Some towns have these monster ranches – capture a critter and take it here to raise it.



Δ You can change a character's job at any time.

Δ Placing archers on higher ground enables you to cover massive distances to really irritate the enemy.

Δ Place locations on the map to reveal hidden treasure.

TACTICS ADVANCE

individual map-making isn't just a cosmetic gimmick, mind you. By placing locations on the map in certain configurations, you'll unlock hidden treasures.

Once you click on a location, you'll open up a list of the missions that you've bought that are specific to that particular region. Choose a mission and you'll be whisked off to the battlefield. Of course, the fighting is where it's all at, and *Final Fantasy Tactics* certainly doesn't disappoint. Initially things are overwhelming, as there are restrictive rules to adhere to for each fight. You can check these out at the start of the battle and they range from forbidden item and ability use to banned weapons and magic.

If you breach these rules then the battle judge (an armour-plated chocobo-riding dude) will either give you a warning with a yellow card or send you off to prison.

"THE SHEER VOLUME OF ITEMS, CLASSES AND JOBS AVAILABLE TO EACH CHARACTER IS STAGGERING"

The battle system is very much like the *Ogre Battle* series. Characters take it in turns to move around the isometric landscape, targeting enemies and unleashing attacks. Each character, depending on his class, equipped armour and weaponry, has a different range of attacks. Likewise, different character classes have access to a wide variety of skills, with a further skill set available depending on which of the vast array of weapons and items they have equipped.

This is undoubtedly *Final Fantasy Tactics*' finest aspect. The sheer volume of items, character classes and jobs available is staggering. What this breadth of choice means is that you can tailor your eight-strong clan however you please, and tinkering with their stats and abilities becomes a genuine labour of love.

After a few hours or so you become *very* attached to your team. You have your favourites – your specialised damage dealers, your trusty archer and your all-important magic user – and placing them carefully around the unfolding battleground becomes an addictive experience.

BATTLE CLASS

As the game's difficulty progresses, it's immensely satisfying to see your little band turn the tide of battle with some well thought-out decisions. You'll wince at your GBA every time an attack misses and conversely, you'll jump for joy when a carefully considered tactic culminates in three enemies biting the dust simultaneously, when you fry them with a well-timed magical attack.

It's a superbly executed strategy game, but unfortunately there are some rather sloppy flaws. The experience gained by your team seems wildly out of balance (you can hurt your own team just to get EXP, for example) and the menu system, especially when it comes to equipping items, seems clunky at times. Still, when you have a game that can easily boast 70-plus gameplay hours *and* keep you hooked for *at least* 69 of them, it's easy to overlook irritations such as these.

GERAINT EVANS


Δ Don't open books. Words are dangerous.


INFO BURST

FROM	SQUARE ENIX
PLAYERS	1-2
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING
91


Δ Look at it. Just LOOK AT IT! Do we…


Δ …really need to suffer another of these?

THE LION KING

GBA reviews just wouldn't be the same without a trashy Disney platformer…


You have to wonder if people are doing it on purpose. You know, picking up a Disney license and soiling the memory of the film with 20-year-old platforming mechanics. In this particular case, it smells of the Game Boy Color's *Jungle Book*, except it's neither as entertaining or as clever.

It's your standard platforming affair. You have the opening tutorial that walks you through your character's moves, all of which are handily signposted as you walk through the first stages of the adventure. From then on in it's a case of running, stomping and fruit collecting. Curiously, you can access completed levels at any time in order to pick up any fruit you've missed – although quite why anyone would want to endure this kind of torture is anyone's guess.

The further you go, the more expansive the levels get, but again, why should you bother yourself with the tedium of doing so? Less of a lion, more of a kitten. **GE**



INFO BURST	
FROM	THQ
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **49**


Δ It might look shockingly bad, but get over this and you'll find an entertaining game.

ODDWORLD MUNCH'S ODDYSEE

And no, it's not total rubbish…


It looks awful, it really does. The terrible intro artwork, the bland environments and the poorly animated sprites hardly grab you. But get through the first 15 minutes and you'll find a rather pleasing puzzle-adventure.

You take control of Munch and Abe – one's vaguely humanoid, while the other looks like an amphibious turnip – and it's up to you to work together to complete their quest. While both characters have different skills (Munch can swim for example), they both have the ability to command little bands of helpers to enable them to open doors and such like. So while the levels don't look like much, there's a gratifying amount of head-scratching to be done, making this a surprisingly engaging and satisfying experience. **GE**



INFO BURST	
FROM	THQ
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	PASSWORD
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **72**

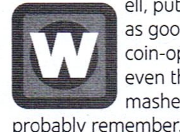

Δ Each different Turtle has his own…



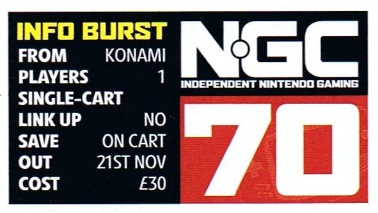
Δ …unique journey through the game.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

Those heroes in a half-shell return with predictably mindless results…


Well, put it this way… this isn't as good as the old Konami coin-op – and these days, even that four-player button masher isn't as good as you probably remember.

That's not to say this is an unmitigated disaster, as it reflects the revamped cartoon series rather nicely. Visually it's pretty decent, with some slick animation and crisp characters to batter the living daylights out of. As far as the gameplay goes, it's all pretty basic, 2D single-plane beating and platforming. Chuck in the odd boss encounter and flying/driving sections and that's pretty much your lot. Mildly diverting, if not massively enjoyable side-scrolling action. It's not particularly offensive, but it lacks any real stand-out features to set it apart from the herd. **GE**



INFO BURST	
FROM	KONAMI
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	21ST NOV
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **70**

MEGA MAN ZERO 2

Somewhere a factory of great evil is churning these out by the thousands…


Everything on offer here is just as you'd expect. You have your charge beam, Mega Man still hasn't learned to duck and yes, the first boss you encounter (five minutes after turning the game on) will still take you 20 tries to beat.

Still, the game does look quite lovely, with top notch *MM*-style artwork and, as you'd expect from a company that's been banging these games out for centuries, it's all very accomplished stuff. This doesn't excuse the fact that the game has hardly moved on since the first one, though.

The challenge still comes from memorising enemy patterns. Slip-ups when timing jumps and suchlike are still cruelly punished, with annoying restart points and the overriding feeling that you'd have more fun if you turned your GBA off and looked for a different game.

We can't even say this is one *Mega Man* too far, because as far as we know that happened around 1856, when the 732nd *Mega Man* game was launched… **GE**

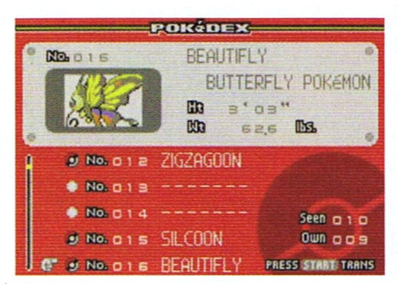

Δ If you've played one – then you've…


Δ …played them all. It's all so, so tedious.



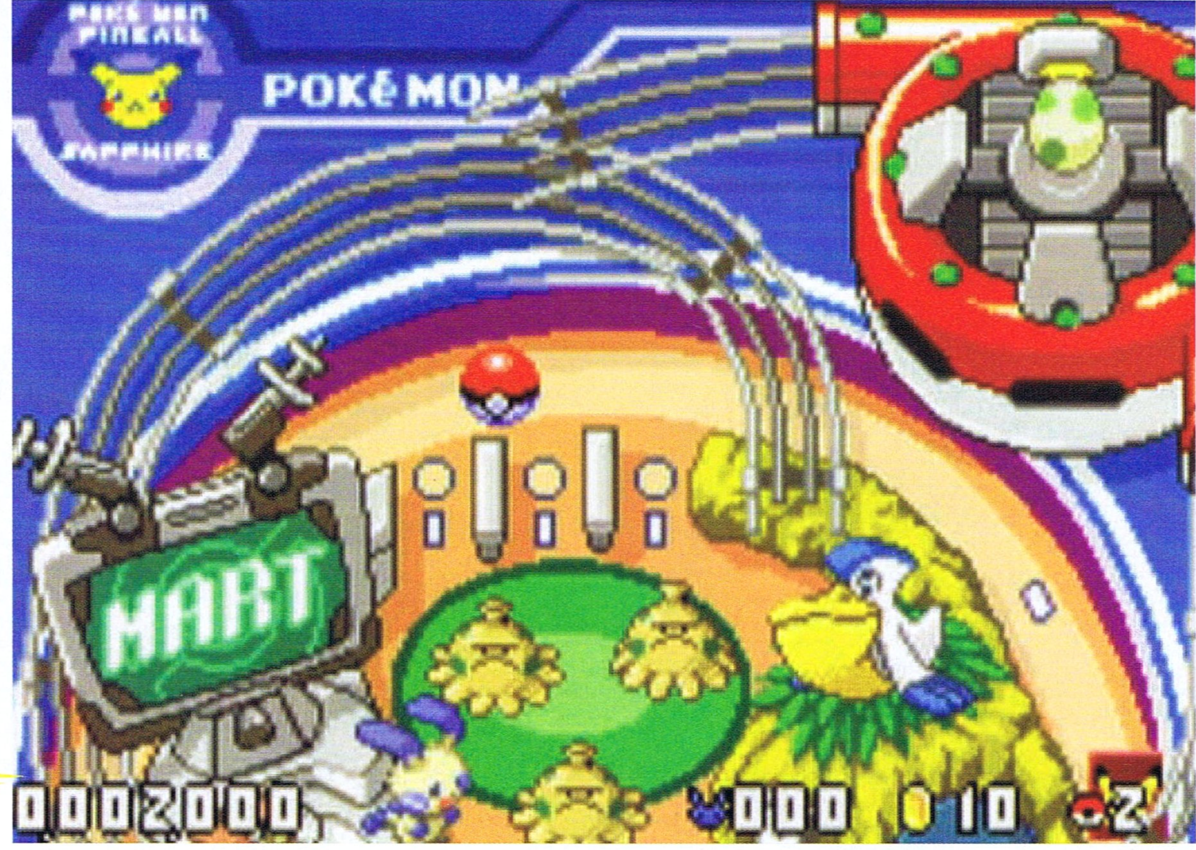
INFO BURST	
FROM	CAPCOM
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **56**

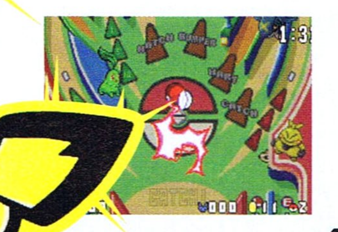


△ While high-scoring is part of the fun, Pokémon collecting is where it's at.





△ Hit your ball into that 'Mart' machine and you'll enter a shop that allows you to buy ball savers and multipliers for any coins you've earned.





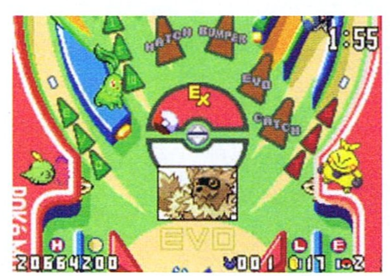





POKÉMON PINBALL

Love 'em or hate 'em, Nintendo still have the balls to churn out Poké-branded spin-offs. But when they're this good…


△ One of the many mini-tables you can access. Do well and your score will rocket.


△ Collect three of these Ex icons and your Pokémon will evolve into its next form.

Anyone who's spent any time with the Game Boy Color's *Pokémon Pinball* will no doubt testify to its laid-back brilliance. The same, thankfully, can be said about this more recent *Ruby and Sapphire* version.

Once again, Pokémon catching and high-score pinballing are the name of the game. You can catch Pokémon by hitting your Pokéball into various holes or up ramps in a certain order, before a critter is released onto the table – then you have to smack your ball into it a few times to claim it as your own. Once caught, it goes into your Pokédex for inspection. There are around 200 Pokémon for you to find and collect – a task that shouldn't be undertaken lightly.

Of course, the main attraction of the game will come through mastering the tables, increasing your high scores and finding all the bonus mini-tables. These are the areas where you can ramp up your score significantly, and each has specific tasks to undertake. In one example you'll have to find a hidden Pokémon and then batter it. Other tables are set out like a boss battle, with you having to extinguish boss attacks before whacking the creature with a well-aimed Pokéball. The more skilful you become, the more you'll begin to find on each table and, consequently, the more hopelessly addicted you'll be. So addicted in fact, that for a little while you'll forget that the 'other' table actually exists. And once you've exhausted all its hidden delights, you'll be able to start the whole life-absorbing experience again.

Of the two tables you can choose from (Ruby and Sapphire, unsurprisingly), we'd say that Sapphire is our favourite, but both are sufficiently different to offer new experiences on each. As we'd hoped – and this is something that many pinball games often get wrong – the tables themselves are clean, crisp and free of clutter, without sacrificing any hidden depths in terms of score bonuses and mini-games. You can always clearly see what you're doing, and this instantly eliminates any frustration in trying to aim your Pokéball where you want it to go. Which, in itself, is testament to the game's spot-on ball physics.

It's one of those games that's short and sharp enough to work wonderfully on a handheld, allowing you to dip in and out of it on your way to work. And there's also more than enough substance here to keep you in chunky night-time gaming sessions.

GERAINT EVANS

INFO BURST

FROM	NINTENDO
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	14TH NOV
COST	£30



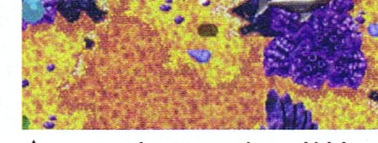
"It's essentially more of the same, albeit on a smaller scale"

△ By getting Mumbo to turn you into a mouse, you can get through small holes to explore further.

△ Once again, Klungo is doing his best to help Grunty get her revenge on Banjo.



△ All the elements from a Banjo game are in here. Jinjos, eggs, feathers and jiggies…



△ …even underwater sections, which have been very well worked and give the game…

△ …that extra sense of scale. It really does feel like N64 *Banjo* on the GBA. Brilliant stuff.

BANJO-KAZOOIE GRUNTY'S REVENGE

The witch is back! Take a step back in time as the N64's inseparable duo hit the GBA in another platforming epic…



He heh! Maybe we should give this 72% just to wind all our readers up. Except we won't, because, contrary to common belief, we're not so bitter about Rare's departure that we'd purposefully downgrade scores. Unlike *Star Fox Adventures*, *Banjo-Kazooie* is a welcome return to form for Rare, and adds itself to the GBA's already fantastic top tier of titles.



△ Mumbo again. Go to him when you've collected his totems and he'll transform you.

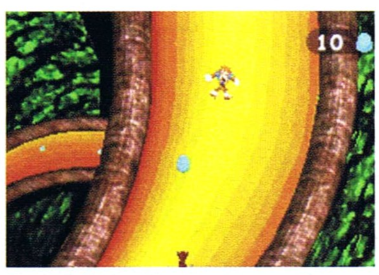
Once again, Grunty's out for revenge. Her ghost has taken control of a huge Grunty-mecha, bird-napped Kazooie and taken him into the past – to a time before Banjo and his feathered friend ever ruined her dastardly plans.

It's a story that kicks off an adventure that will bring memories of all things Banjo flooding back. The chirpy music and the 'boo-blah-blah' nonsense warbles over the dialogue as you collect notes, retrieve Jinjos and perform the obligatory platforming duties across yet another expansive, vibrantly coloured and often surreal landscape. Ah, bliss…

Amazingly, the translation to the small screen has gone phenomenally well. Rare have managed to cram in all the *Banjo*-related features you would expect. Whether it's the characters (Mole and Witchdoctor included), the moves or the swimming sections and minigames, it's all in here and executed with style.

Much like the *Banjo* games before it, there's a certain element of free-roaming going on, with a collecting mentality running underneath, whether you're after Jiggies, notes, Jinjos or items a, b and c for the NPCs in the game. Everything needs to be sought out and delivered to their rightful place to be traded for new moves, items or access to new areas.

There's always something to keep you occupied. New skills often tempt you into backtracking, so that you can use them on previously interesting areas that you couldn't pass before. It's essentially more of the same, albeit on a smaller scale. This is by no means a bad thing, especially if you're looking for something that isn't just another *Mario* SNES port…



△ One of the many minigames you'll encounter. Excellent diversions they are too.

GERAINT EVANS



INFO BURST

FROM	RARE
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

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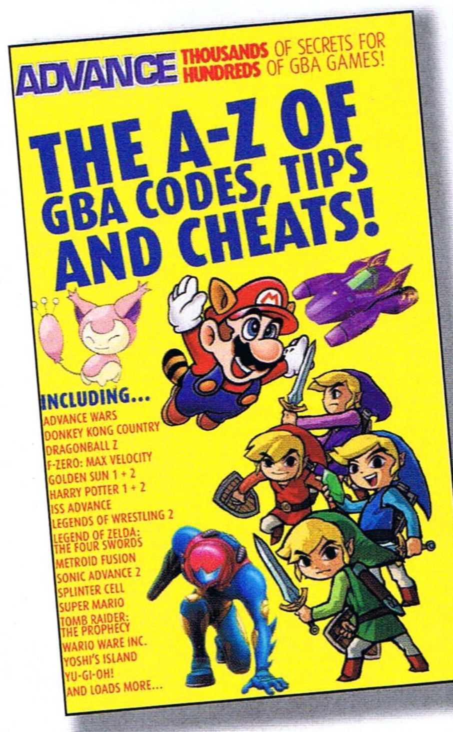






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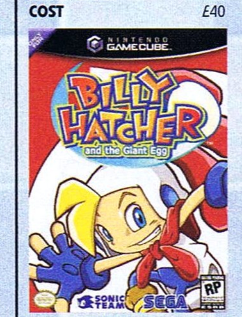
"Clinging to your egg like a barely controllable Monkey Ball"

△ It's a *Mario*-style challenge to collect the blue coins before the timer runs out. These challenges start out very easy, and swiftly become barely achievable without loads and loads of retries.

△ Orange eggs should have something fairly powerful hidden inside them.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	SEGA
DEVELOPER	SONIC TEAM
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW (US) 7TH NOV (UK)
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	YES
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES
COST	£40



BILLY HATCHER AND THE GIANT EGG

Hatch it while you can! Sega's unlikely hero makes a flawed but adorable debut…



△ Time for a boss battle – prepare to get busy with those camera controls.



ROLL-O-RAMA

How Billy Hatcher handles that Giant Egg.

BILLY BASICS

The control stick moves Billy, with tip-toe ability if he's not packing yolk, and full-on maniac speed with an egg in his hands. The C-stick and left shoulder button adjust the camera, which is something you'll have to do an awful lot if you're to avoid those running-into-the-screen moments, and the right shoulder button handles dashing, rolling and hatching. A and B control jumps and throws and Y activates special items. Couldn't be simpler.

BREAKING A FEW EGGS

We're not making omelettes here, so the last thing you want is a messed-up egg. Enemies and solid objects will put cracks in the shell if you don't hit them right, and eventually it explodes, splattering egg guts all over the place. Take care. These things don't just pop out of chickens' arses, you know.





You weren't expecting this one to be all that great, were you? To be perfectly honest, neither were we. But let's just start by saying that the title is probably the only really lame thing about this game.

If anything's going to turn mainstream punters away from one of the best and most original platformers on Gamecube, it's a name like *Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg*. It says nothing about the insane weirdness of the game, which we reckon should have been called *Go Go Super Egg Maniacs* or something crazy and Japanese-sounding like that.

It's all about young Billy from sunny, happy Morning Land, who wakes up one day to find the whole place plunged into darkness. This disastrous occurrence is the work of evil crows,



△ This monster is a master of karate-style attacks.



△ Rails can be incredibly awkward to handle.



△ Don't let them crack your egg – kill them, quickly.



△ Search around for the right type of egg. Don't waste your time feeding a useless one.



△ Billy collects a chicken emblem, which is the game's equivalent of a shine in *Mario Sunshine*.



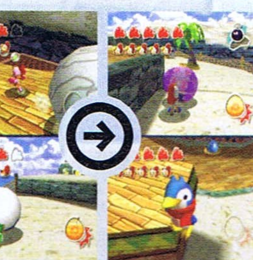
△ Racing against a giant Clippen. You'll need an egg at all times, otherwise certain obstacles will prove impossible to get past. Billy is just a little bit useless without some serious yolk action.

EGG BATTLE

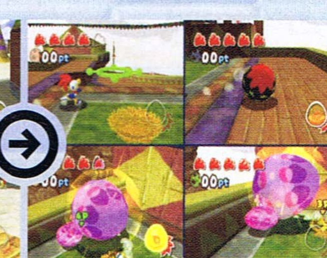
It hardly seems like the kind of game that would have a decent multiplayer mode, but Billy's suprisingly good. Choose one of four characters, then rampage around the levels, trying to do bad things to your rival's egg. Frantic four-player fun.











which have mutated into gigantic cartoon monsters and kidnapped Morning Land's sacred Chicken Elders, sealing them inside golden eggs.

In order to banish the nefarious forces and restore tranquility to the land, Billy dons the Legendary Chicken Suit, which gives him power over the giant eggs that grow from little straw nests dotted all over the place.

Eggs contain powerful creatures and special items essential for completing the quest, but you have to nurture them before they'll hatch. And the only way to do this is to feed them by rolling them over pieces of tasty fruit until they swell to bursting point. Then Billy squawks a hearty cock-a-doodle-doo, and out pops something useful.

Eggs aren't just for hatching though, as Billy is virtually defenceless without one in his hands. An unhatched egg is your main weapon for dispatching bad guys, thanks to a wide variety of attacking moves. You can simply roll over things and crush them into their fruity essence if you wish, but there are big points on offer for pulling off destructive combos with your egg, and *Billy Hatcher* is a score-based game that rates your performance at the end of every level.

"THERE ARE BIG POINTS ON OFFER FOR PULLING OFF DESTRUCTIVE COMBOS WITH YOUR EGG"



GBA BONUS

Not only is there a hefty Gamecube game in here, there are also some Game Boy Advance goodies to unlock and download via a link cable. We won't spoil the surprise by telling you what they all are, but veteran Sega fans should be delighted with them, even if PSO players might have seen at least one of them in the past. It's a great way to make use of the GC-GBA link.

The early puzzles tend to involve little more than defeating every enemy to open a locked door to the next section, which can be satisfying enough given the range of moves on offer.

But as the game progresses, with new objectives opening up in a non-linear *Mario* style, you'll need more than mere brute force to make progress.

EGG-CELLENT

Sometimes you'll have to make Billy part company with the egg, pushing it down a track and racing to the end to catch the thing before it smashes.

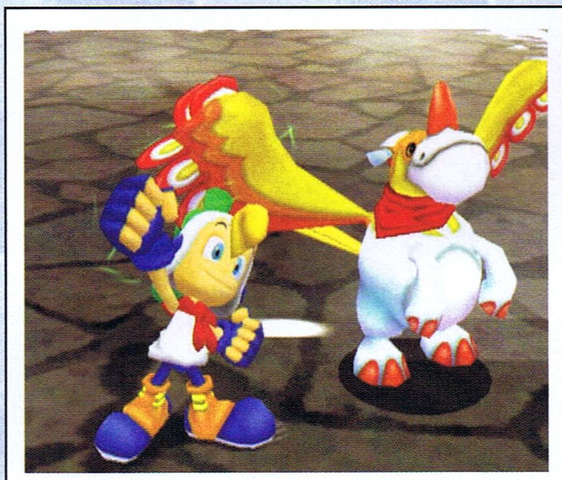
There might be steep, hazard-strewn ramps to career down, with you clinging to your egg like a barely controllable Monkey Ball, and dangerous routes to



DID YOU KNOW? Sonic Team have probably the nicest office in the world, complete with a padded play area/board room. It won awards for outstanding interior design in Japan.

SUPER GIANT EGG PANIC

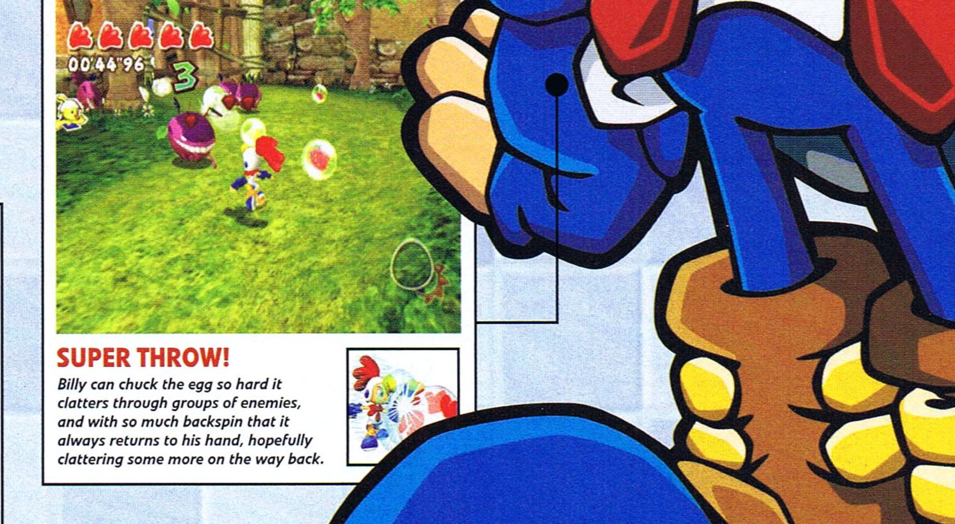
Young Mr Hatcher rolls them like nobody else. Here's eggsactly how it all works…



NICE HATCH!



When your egg is nice and fat, press R to charge up Billy's throat-warbling cockerel crow. Release the button and see what emerges when the shell shatters. It could be a power-up, a weapon, a new ability or, best of all, a monster that will do all your whoopin' and a-wailin' for you.



SUPER THROW!

Billy can chuck the egg so hard it clatters through groups of enemies, and with so much backspin that it always returns to his hand, hopefully clattering some more on the way back.



NICE JUMP!



To enhance the basic jump move, Billy bounces even higher using the egg as a giant Space Hopper. Once airborne, special new attacking moves become available for expert players.



COOL COMBO!

You can take care of most enemies simply by rolling the egg over them. But that's not the way to get big scores and good grades at the end of a level. There are bonuses for taking out entire groups using quick combinations of several moves, and the more impressively it's done, the better your score.

WILD DUNK!

Get a bit of height by jumping or bouncing and this powerful move can clear clusters of enemies with its shockwave. The bigger the egg, the better the dunk.

GREAT ROLL!

Hold the R-button while rolling the egg and Billy gets a brief burst of speed. It's perfect for dashing up steep slopes or zooming away from trouble, plus you can combine it with a jump to start Billy rolling uncontrollably around the egg, like a monkey in some sort of strange, lumpen ball.

"Highly replayable"

FRIED, SCRAMBLED OR HARD BOILED?

If you thought finding a bit of blood in your egg was gross, check this out…



CIRCUS HAT

Balance on top of the egg like a circus clown. This is the only way to get across rivers, and it looks funny. Clowns make us want to kill.



RED COMB

Gives your egg the power of fire! Other combs make the egg metallic and extra strong, or watery and able to pass through jets of flame. Handy, that.



MIND POWER

Wearing this funky cap transports Billy's tiny mind into the heart of the egg, allowing it to be rolled without touching it. It has a very limited range.



WATER MONSTER

Got a fire that needs putting out? Who you gonna call? Clippen, that's who. This mutant penguin is the fire brigade of the game, and it never strikes.



NOW WITH WINGS

Billy and the gang can't match Mario for acrobatic ability, but this feathery item will make them a little less leaden-footed. It's a double jump, no less.





△ This is a graphical treat – snow that sticks to a snowball as you roll it around. Impressive.



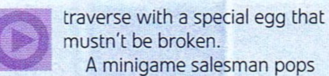
△ Like one of *Donkey Kong Country*'s barrel launchers. Aim at the target and fire off an eggy salvo.







△ The diverse levels often look extremely pretty.



traverse with a special egg that mustn't be broken.

A minigame salesman pops up from time to time, offering *Mario*-style coin-collecting challenges, and there are boss characters to fight or race against.

One frosty level sees the egg replaced with a snowball, which you build to giant size by rolling it around in the snow until the thing's big enough to form the crowning glory for a monster of a snowman.

There are also extra playable characters to find, unlocking new challenges on the previous levels.

EGG-CEPTIONAL

It's a big, clever, immensely playable game. Unless you ever owned the obscure N64 oldie *Glover*, which scored 83% way back in issue 21, we can safely say you're not likely to have seen anything like *Billy Hatcher* before.

The controls are simple and the gameplay is pretty straightforward to figure out. The characters are brilliant, certainly worthy of being used in further games, and some old Sega favourites make very welcome guest appearances once you've explored enough of the highly replayable levels.

There are GBA bonus games to find, surprise techniques to discover and more than 70 types of egg to locate and catalogue in a Pokédex-style diary.

And if all that isn't enough to convince you of Billy's Star Game worthiness, the multiplayer mode offers the kind of vicious laughs that may well keep you playing long after the solo adventure has been completed.

So why does it just miss out on that Star Game status? To us, and others who have played through both the finished US and PAL versions, it seems like final playtesting was largely omitted for the last couple of levels. We felt like calling Sonic Team supremo Yuji Naka to warn him that Sega were about to

"THE CHARACTERS ARE BRILLIANT AND SOME OLD SEGA FAVOURITES MAKE WELCOME GUEST APPEARANCES"



RAIL DISASTER

This segment of egg-transporting rail looks solid enough to trust. After all, getting your precious egg from point A to point B is its sole purpose and, let's face it, it's hardly rocket science, is it? But roll the egg at anything other than the perfect angle, and you'll watch in dismay as it fails to engage with the rails and tumbles to oblivion. Design flaw ahoy!

BILLY HATCHER
That's quite an oeuf



FIRE BEAST
Most egg creatures cut a swathe through any type of enemy, but this one is among the most spectacular. And it can melt ice too. Wowsers!



BUM EGG
Waste fruit on hatching one of the basic blue and white jobbies and you'll be in for a shock. They're almost always empty. So they're phantom bum eggs.



MYSTERY EGG
Dare you crack it open? You should be so lucky – you won't even get the chance until you've collected enough gold coins. It's worth saving for…



△ **There's a definite tactic for disposing of each type of enemy. These flying bugs take some beating.**



△ **Blue rails are for rolling on, although you can do the same on red rails if you're crafty.**

release an unfinished game, but alas, it was too late to make a difference.

The problem is that because the first four worlds are so fantastic and packed with innovation, the last two come as a big, frustrating disappointment. Where the early levels are expansive and great fun to explore, the later ones rely on cheap tricks such as narrow ledges and sudden deaths to add a wholly unnecessary level of difficulty.

One particular obstacle requires the exploitation of a glitch in order to get past it (see 'rail disaster', left). Rather than roll the egg and collect it, as had been taught on previous levels and as was clearly the designer's intention here, you have to bounce it into the air, hold the R-button to shoot forwards, and just hope it engages with the rails. Better than losing all your lives just watching the egg fall between a section of railway that doesn't appear to have any active collision detection.

Other shoddy sections rely on long, unwelcome precision-jumping sequences, which don't work well given the camera's tendency to move to a more 'helpful' position at a crucial moment and the lack of analogue control when Billy has an egg. He can either go full speed ahead or come screeching to a halt, which is fine in the more open areas but not a great deal of fun when you're forced to collect fruit on a tiny path above a bottomless pit.

Whether Sonic Team simply ran out of ideas or the game had to be rushed out to meet a deadline is irrelevant. *Billy Hatcher* is absolutely brilliant until around the start of the circus world, when it suddenly decides to kick you in the nuts rather than pat you on the back. It's a shame to see such *Mario*-equalling potential fail to materialise at the very last moment.

Of course, none of this is fatal, and *Billy Hatcher* goes to prove, once again, that Nintendo consoles are the only natural home for the kind of bright, buoyant fun that seems totally out of place anywhere else.

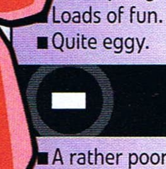
It's far better than any of regular Sega mascot Sonic the Hedgehog's excursions into 3D, which is reason enough for a more polished sequel.

Sales of this game will determine whether that happens, and while we'd love to see this at the top of the charts, where it belongs, it's more likely that *Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg* will be one of those games treasured and sought after in years to come by the privileged, enlightened few.

Just make sure you're one of them.

MARTIN KITTS

FRUIT BEASTS
Some types of monster contain two whole pieces of fruit. Wick! Naturally, such wholesome fruity goodness isn't easy to get your hands on, and double-fruiters are tough enough to come with their own mini health bars. They usually take three hits to destroy, which is poor economy compared to the basic single-fruiters, which die by the dozen.

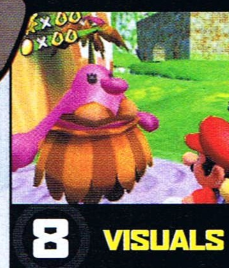


+
- Very Japanese.
- Very original.
- Loads of fun.
- Quite eggy.

–
- A rather poor camera.
- Can be needlessly frustrating.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Super Mario Sunshine
Nintendo
NGC/73 96%
Highly polished 3D action with Mario, Yoshi and a talking water pistol.



8 VISUALS
Mostly smooth and good. There's a 60Hz mode in the PAL one.

8 SOUNDS
The theme tune and chicken noises will haunt your dreams.



7 MASTERY
GBA linkage is good, annoyingness of final levels is not.

9 LIFESPAN
Quite replayable, and a decent multiplayer mode too.

VERDICT
If you're after a completely new experience and don't mind putting up with a few flaws, Billy's your egg-rolling boy.





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Grunty's Revenge









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NGC ESSENTIAL

THE BEST CUBE GAMES MONEY CAN BUY...

TOP FIVE PLATFORM GAMES

Running, jumping, collecting items and power-ups... Platformers are one of the oldest videogame genres, but they're monstrously addictive.



SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE



RAYMAN 3 HOODLUM HAVOC



WARIO WORLD



SONIC MEGA COLLECTION



SONIC ADVENTURE 2 BATTLE







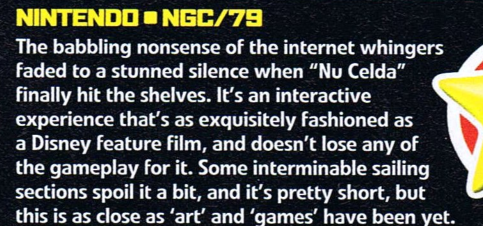


1 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA THE WIND WAKER — 97

NINTENDO ■ NGC/79

The babbling nonsense of the internet whingers faded to a stunned silence when "Nu Celda" finally hit the shelves. It's an interactive experience that's as exquisitely fashioned as a Disney feature film, and doesn't lose any of the gameplay for it. Some interminable sailing sections spoil it a bit, and it's pretty short, but this is as close as 'art' and 'games' have been yet.

NGC STAR GAME





2 METROID PRIME — 97

NINTENDO ■ NGC/79

A polished, addictive stunningly immersive adventure-cum-shooter-cum-platformer that will make you cry when it's over. Pushes the envelope in every field. Classic.





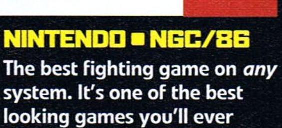
3 SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE — 96

NINTENDO ■ NGC/73

Mazza's cleaning up oily muck on a tropical island put there by an evil villain. With all the intuitiveness, polished visuals, and sense of pure fun of *Mario 64*, this pushes all the right buttons.

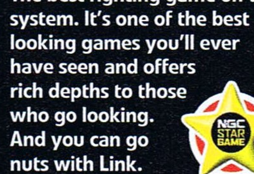


4 SOUL CALIBUR 2 — 92

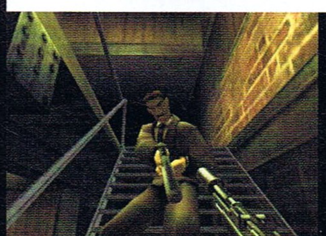


NINTENDO ■ NGC/86

The best fighting game on *any* system. It's one of the best looking games you'll ever have seen and offers rich depths to those who go looking. And you can go nuts with Link.

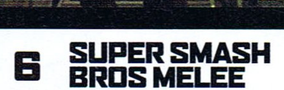


5 TIMESPLITTERS 2 — 92



EIDOS ■ NGC/72

A stonker of a time-travelling FPS with more than a whiff of *GoldenEye*, *Timesplitters 2* crept out of nowhere to officially become Gamecube's finest example of the genre. Wick!

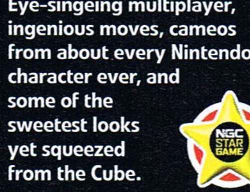


6 SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE — 91



NINTENDO ■ NGC/68

Eye-singeing multiplayer, ingenious moves, cameos from about every Nintendo character ever, and some of the sweetest looks yet squeezed from the Cube.



7 WAVE RACE BLUE STORM — 91

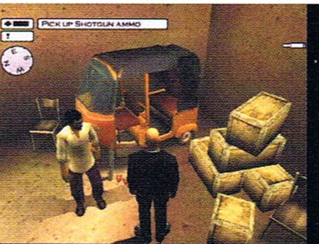


NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

Slight frame-rate problems in PAL, but *Blue Storm* is still a fabulous racer, replete with *the* most incredible water effects ever. Fast, dynamic, accessible and sublime to control.

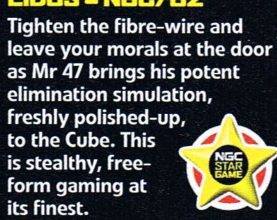


8 HITMAN 2 SILENT ASSASSIN — 91



EIDOS ■ NGC/82

Tighten the fibre-wire and leave your morals at the door as Mr 47 brings his potent elimination simulation, freshly polished-up, to the Cube. This is stealthy, free-form gaming at its finest.



9 BURNOUT 2 90



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80

B2 takes the best bits of the first game – bum-clenching speed and bone-crunching collisions – and welds them onto more modes than you can eat. A brilliant series refinement.

10 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE 90



ATARI ■ NGC/78

Essentially *Gauntlet* with lots of numbers and menu screens, online *PSO* becomes an epic tale of crate-smashing, internet companionship, and fevered item collection. Blork!

11 SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS 90

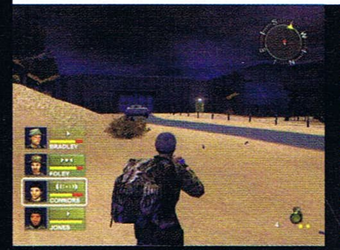




ATARI ■ NGC/81

Vast boat-based RPG ported from the Dreamcast. "It'll take away a chunk of your life and you won't want it back", says a man versed in such things. It's very good, apparently.

12 CONFLICT DESERT STORM 2 90



SCI ■ NGC/86

War? Like Georgie-boy Bush, we just can't get enough of it. You're not allowed to let any of your men die in this sequel, which leads to all sorts of life-saving heroic gameplay.

13 RESIDENT EVIL 89



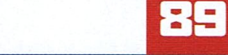
CAPCOM ■ NGC/72

The classic zombie-horror fear-fest recreated to take advantage of the Cube's superior electrical witchcraft. Stunning, mesmerising visuals, unrivalled atmosphere and a brilliant storyline. Controls are still crap, though.



14 ETERNAL DARKNESS 89







NINTENDO ■ NGC/74

A rollicking Lovecraftian yarn of ancient evils, *Eternal Darkness* replaces slick zombie-slaying action with a wonderfully creepy story told through a cast of 12 playable characters and a truly innovative magic system.

15 SPLINTER CELL 89

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/81

Starring Sam Fisher, a man with three green glowing eyeballs and powerful thigh muscles. Clanciverse stealth-fest with a gritty 'realistic' feel and the opportunity to operate various Clancy-approved hi-tech gizmos.

16 LUIGI'S MANSION 88

NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

With Mazza incarcerated in a haunted house by you-know-who, brother Luigi ushered in the year of the Cube in with this fantastically playable combination of *Super Mario World* and Ghostbusters. It's a little bit short, but still ace.

17 SUPER MONKEY BALL 88



ATARI ■ NGC/67

Ingenious simian-flavoured update of *Marble Madness*. Chuck in a monkey *Mario Kart*, pool, golf and 'springy boxing' and you've got one of the weirdest, most wonderful Gamecube games out there. Great stuff.

18 STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER 87

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68

Rogue Leader bolts eye-popping renditions of the Battle of Hoth and the Trench Run onto silky-smooth space battles to produce the most memorable – and certainly the best-looking – Star Wars game yet. Well done, Lucas.

19 SSX TRICKY 87

EA ■ NGC/69

Has PS2 written all over it in big, fat neon letters, but still works wonders with your Cube. Fast, spectacular courses, shortcuts and secrets and some mid-piste scrappage make this conversion brilliant, *brilliant* entertainment.

20 DEF JAM VENDETTA 87



MAJESCO ■ NGC/82

Wrestling thumpfest featuring all your favourite hip-hop artistes from 'the block'. Bone-crunching moves, booty with all that, and some 'sick' beats. But where are Flava Flav and Easy-E? Chekkit!

TOP TEN GBA GAMES





1 ADVANCE WARS
A cute-looking turn-based strategy game it may be, but underneath is a frighteningly addictive, super-challenging masterpiece that'll hook anyone experiencing it. Frankly, one of the best games we've played.

2 METROID FUSION
Everything that has ever made *Metroid* great can be found here. A sprawling environment littered with baddies and an imposing difficulty level. It has a great link-up feature with *Prime* too.

3 SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2
This slightly tweaked version of the SNES classic boasts a massive game world and some of the tightest level designs ever. Stone-cold classic.

4 GOLDEN SUN THE LOST AGE
A turn-based RPG that's hard to fault. It even lets you to transfer your party stats, items and more from the first *Golden Sun*. Impressive stuff.



5 YOSHI'S ISLAND
Stunning level design, fiendish puzzles and secrets all topped off with some beautiful pastel-shaded visuals. Another essential 2D platformer for GBA.



6 POKÉMON RUBY & SAPPHIRE
The same structure as before – catch 'em all, send 'em in to battle – but it remains the most entertaining RPG out there…



7 SUPER MARIO KART ADVANCE
Much like the superb SNES original: burn around multi-coloured tracks dishing out justice with weapons.



8 STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3
An incredible conversion of one of the best fighters ever. Massive single-player and a brilliant two-player experience.

9 CASTLEVANIA HARMONY OF DISSONANCE
More accessible than its previous GBA outing, this is classic *'Vania*. Imaginative bosses, a steep challenge and very atmospheric.



10 GRADIUS ADVANCE
The best shooter on GBA, and it's doubtful many will ever get close. Classic *Gradius* gameplay, with innovative levels and fantastic bosses.

NGC DIRECTORY

Your at-a-glance guide to everything the Cube has to offer…

HOW IT ALL WORKS

A little screenshot of the game in question…

Title, score, publisher and where to find the review.

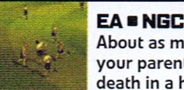
MARIO PARTY CONFERENCE — 87

VOTESOFT ■ NGC/18
Go from one political platform to another, gathering votes to become PM of the Mushroom Kingdom. Can't return it to the shop for four years.

A brief outline of what to expect and whether you should consider it…

18 WHEELER PRO AMERICAN TRUCKER — 48

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/68
Drive your truck from A to B and avoid 'smokey'. A bit like *Out Run* with 'rigs', but the arcade version with the sit-in cabinet was better.

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP — 30

EA ■ NGC/69
About as much fun as being told your parents have been crushed to death in a horrific car crash. And then contracting Weil's Disease.

ACE GOLF — 74

EIDOS ■ NGC/74
A highly enjoyable, relaxing sticksie-ball game that treads a pleasant middle-ground between fun and serious.

AGGRESSIVE INLINE — 81

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72
Gentle *Tony Hawk's* alterno-clone – this time you're skating around massive arenas, 'busting' tricks on a pair of them there 'roller-boots'.

ATV QUAD POWER RACING 2 — 70

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/77
Wave Race on land with bouncy farming utility vehicles. Competent enough, but there's plenty of superior racing fare out there.

BALDUR'S GATE DARK ALLIANCE — 80

VIVENDI ■ NGC/81
Dungeon-slashing adventurising with less numbers and beards and a special two-player flavour added to the mix. Actually quite good.

BARBARIAN — 70
VIRGIN ■ NGC/72
A button-mashing fantasy battler complete with fully-smashable arenas. Fun for a while – but it's not as good as *Smash Bros.*

BATMAN: DARK TOMORROW — 15
KEMCO ■ NGC/81
Bats stars in Gamecube's most arse-clenchingly bad title to date. And it's not even funny-bad. Clunky, dull, gameplay-free superheroics.

BATMAN VENGEANCE — 70

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/67
Cel-shaded platforming cartoon bat-action. One of the first Cube games that came out – but it's looking pretty ropy already.

BEACH SPIKERS — 79

ATARI ■ NGC/72
Volleyball, as played on sand. Brilliantly addictive with four players, but the single-player's longevity lets the side down.

BIG AIR FREESTYLE — 28

ATARI ■ NGC/75
Yet another awful off-road bike title. The kind of game that makes you want to cry the second you've started playing. Don't bother.

BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS — 71

EMPIRE ■ NGC/83
A cross between *Elite* and Smokey and The Bandit, but with The Reynolds replaced by stinking wall-eyed stereotypical hillbillies. Nice.

BLOOD OMEN 2 LEGACY OF KAIN — 72

EIDOS ■ NGC/77
Gamecube's other undead hack-fest. After 1,000 years of slumber, evil vampire lord Kain is awake and hungry. Breakfast, anyone?

BLOOD RAYNE — 65

VIVENDI ■ NGC/79
Vampire fun. Dismember Nazis, fire a staggering array of period weaponry, and battle an *evil priest* driving an *armoured pulpit*. Yup.

BLOODY ROAR: PRIMAL FURY — 74

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68
Competent-enough morphing-into-animals fighting shenanigans, but *Capcom vs SNK* and *Mortal Kombat* have since surpassed it.

BMX XXX — 48

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/76
Childish, boring BMX game featuring pneumatically-enhanced strippers showing you their nipples. Get a girlfriend instead.

TOP FIVE RACING GAMES

WAVE RACE BLUE STORM
A fabulous racer with superb water effects. It'll take a lot to beat this – but the forthcoming *F-Zero GX* might just do it…

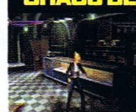
BURNOUT 2
Super-speedy racing combined with steel-crunching crashes and a multitude of modes. Brilliant.

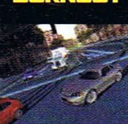
EXTREME G 3
Oh, it's fast and the tracks are enormous, but the really great thing about this effort is the weapons.

DAKAR 2
Driving virtually alone through the desert doesn't sound interesting, but it's actually good fun.

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP
Solid enough rallying for fans of all things fast, muddy and twisty-turny.

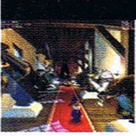
BOMBERMAN GENERATIONS — 70
VIVENDI ■ NGC/76
Yet another update of the venerable arson franchise. Single-player is enjoyable if a little tedious; four-player is as addictive as it ever was.

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER CHAOS BLEEDS — 70

VIVENDI ■ NGC/86
Somehow, this lacks the essential Buffiness we require, and not just because the Gellar girl didn't voice it. Good, but not great.

BURNOUT — 86

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
With bone-splintering, spectacular crashes and twitchy, inch-perfect handling, *Burnout* is a dream of a game, even if it's over a bit quickly.

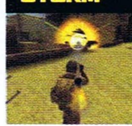
CAPCOM VS SNK 2 EO — 79

CAPCOM ■ NGC/72
A great game, but purist retro freaks will want to fork out for one of those enormous, clunky arcade sticks to get the most from it…

CASTLEWEEN — 16

WANADOO ■ NGC/81
Unfairly difficult dismal platforming tedium with some kind of cartoony black magic schtick going on. *Crash Bandicoot*'s idjut brother.

CEL DAMAGE — 60

EA ■ NGC/66
Silly cel-shaded car-combat game in the vein of violent Warner Bros cartoons. Far too manic and confusing for its own good.

CONFLICT DESERT STORM — 89

SCI ■ NGC/80
Want more war? Tense and teeth-gritting, with a great tactical co-op mode. Brain-based fun for those nuclear winter evenings.

CRASH BANDICOOT THE WRATH OF CORTEX — 40

VIVENDI ■ NGC/75
One of the worst ports we've seen – and of a game that was a stinking load of crap to begin with, too! Avoid like death himself.

CRAZY TAXI — 70

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
Ancient title that's so old it's now been included as one of the minigames in *GTAIII*. Creaky graphics, but still good fun.

DAKAR 2 — 79

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80
Driving around in a vast expanse of dirt, all on your own, for days on end? *Dakar 2* somehow manages to make this into pretty good fun.

DIRECTORY

Every Gamecube game ever… rated!

DARK SUMMIT 51



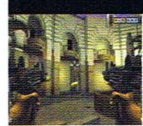
THQ ■ NGC/69
Think *SSX Tricky* but with all the speed, style and entertainment removed with near-surgical precision. A waste of time.

DAVE MIRRA 2 FREESTYLE BMX 75



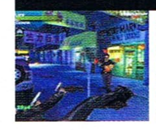
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
Pornography-free moto-cross game that's actually good. Slick, smooth with big arenas – but this will only appeal to the BMX hardcore.

DIE HARD VENDETTA 80



VIVENDI ■ NGC/74
Wear a vest and shoot holes in people who look like terrorists, so America can enjoy one more night of guiltless slumber. Sweary.

DEAD TO RIGHTS 60



EA ■ NGC/83
What if Max Payne had an evil attack dog? Mindless third-person ultraviolence. JACK SLATE is PISSED OFF and wants to HURT SOMEONE!

DEFENDER 50



MIDWAY ■ NGC/79
Rather pointless 3D update that makes one of the hardest-core arcade classics really easy, and by extension, depressingly dull.

DISNEY'S EXTREME SKATE ADVENTURE 74



DISNEY ■ NGC/85
Neither extreme nor adventurous. This passable skater would be fine for people not up to *Tony Hawk's*, like your little brother or nan.

DISNEY'S MAGICAL MIRROR 26



DISNEY ■ NGC/73
A cruel form of torture as The Mouse patronises his way through this hideous 'adventure'. Almost Beckettian in its non-eventfulness.

DISNEY SPORTS BASKETBALL 55



KONAMI ■ NGC/82
Strip away the franchised exterior and it's another pointlessly simple Sports title. Soon to follow: *Disney Sports Russian Roulette*.

DISNEY SPORTS FOOTBALL 69



KONAMI ■ NGC/76
Oddly enough, this isn't anywhere near as bad as you may think. It's an amusing, simple footie game, ideal for younger gamers.

DISNEY'S PARTY 56



EA ■ NGC/86
Disney retain their run of mediocre form with a mildly entertaining party game – but would you pay £30 to be mildly entertained?

TOP FIVE EDIBLE GAME BODS

JIGGLYPUFF
Tastes like marshmallow and very good in cakes, but must be eaten immediately after baking or it 'sinks'.

KIRBY
Ideal bubblegum substitute. When the flavour's gone, stick him to the underside of a desk…

YOSHI EGGS
Perfect for large omelets – for sweet, add fruit, for savoury, add mushrooms. *(I wouldn't put anything Yoshi laid in my mouth – Ed.)*

PIG FROM ZELDA
Mmm… bacon.

TINGLE
Not what you'd call tasty, but carving him with a large butcher's knife is satisfying. After that, cook on a low heat until the screaming stops.

Christopher Berry of Worcester wins something out of Ger's nigh-empty drawer o' tat.

DISNEY SPORTS SKATEBOARDING 64



KONAMI ■ NGC/80
The Mouse and his irritating friends have a crack at busting tricks on half-pipes. Walt must be spinning in his cryogenic storage-pod by now.

DONALD DUCK GOIN' QUACKERS 32



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/68
A bit like *Crash Bandicoot*, except with The Duck in charge, wearing a sailor's costume and going bthackakackthh. Also total rubbish.

DOSHIN THE GIANT 62



NINTENDO ■ NGC/74
Quirky title that puts you in charge of a giant schizophrenic yellow man who must help/hinder indigenous islanders. A little short-lived.

DR MUTO 70



MIDWAY ■ NGC/79
Amusing mad-doctor platforming game where you have to mutate into different animals to solve puzzles. Science is fun after all!

DRIVEN 60



BAM ■ NGC/68
Very basic, very short game of the appaling film about driving fast in a large circle. Filling up bargain bins worldwide as we speak.

DROME RACERS 46



EA ■ NGC/85
Brings nothing new to racing, and doesn't manage to do the old stuff with any flair. If this is the future, we'll stick with the 21st century.

EGGO MANIA 49



KEMCO ■ NGC/72
Rubbish take on *Tetris* that, mystifyingly, involves ovulations. Wouldn't look out of place on an Amiga. Pointless in every way.

ENTER THE MATRIX 73



ATARI ■ NGC/81
Take the red pill and find out how vaguely disappointing this movie tie-in is. After all the hype we were expecting something really special.

ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS 2002 37



KONAMI ■ NGC/67
Winter sports game combining tiresome button-mashing antics with equally dull timing and precision exercises. Dull.

EVOLUTION SKATEBOARDING 78



KONAMI ■ NGC/79
Snazzy-looking *Hawk's* clone, but then, as they said in the old Galaxy ads, why have cotton when you can have silk? Or something like that.

EVOLUTION SNOWBOARDING 23



KONAMI ■ NGC/79
Fight bad guys while sliding down a mountain on a tray. Somehow even worse than *Dark Summit*. Games like these should be made illegal.

EXTREME G 3 85



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67
A bit of an underrated gem, *XG 3* offers pulse-shattering speed, huge tracks, some ingenious weaponry and eye-spanking visuals.

F1 2002 67



EA ■ NGC/71
Rock-hard racing simulator your dad will enjoy. Also features humourless German driving robot M Schumacher version 1.0.

F1 CAREER CHALLENGE 81



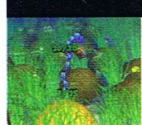
EA ■ NGC/83
Densely packed representation of the glamorous world of F1 team management. At least it lets you take the cars for a spin as well.

FIFA 2003 83



EA ■ NGC/75
EA finally remember how good football games are made. Actually a bit better than *ISS 2*. Need we say it's also a vast improvement?

FINDING NEMO 65



THQ ■ NGC/86
Horrible, *horrible* loading times and stuttering graphics spoil what could have been an enjoyable time for rugrat gamers.





DIRECTORY

Every Gamecube game ever... rated!

FREEDOM FIGHTERS — 83



IO ■ NGC/86
Organise resistance and blast invading Russian commies intent on taking over the US. Realistic? Not on your nelski. Fun? Oh da.

FIREBLADE — 59



MIDWAY ■ NGC/77
Nondescript brain-free helicopter game that will appeal to military memorabilia-collecting psychos and likers of bad '80s Vietnam 'movies'.

FROGGER BEYOND — 59



KONAMI ■ NGC/80
The current trend of 'improving' ancient games by making them 3D taken to its most extreme conclusion. Functional gaming.

GAUNTLET: DARK LEGACY — 25



MIDWAY ■ NGC/68
We'd be far more comfortable with this travesty if we'd had it inserted rectally. An insult to the legacy of a venerable arcade classic.

GODZILLA: DESTROY ALL MONSTERS MELEE — 68



ATARI ■ NGC/74
Lots of good stompy, building-smashing monster fun in multiplayer mode, but otherwise a little weak. Get *Smash Bros* instead.

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS — 78



EA ■ NGC/75
Attractive and competent enough adaptation of Potter's film – but rather easy with it. Only die-hard speccy wizard fans need apply.

HOT WHEELS: VELOCITY X — 45



THQ ■ NGC/75
Basic racing/car-combat game based on plastic toys. Perhaps even coded in basic. Strictly for the very, very young. Or very stupid.

HULK — 65



VIVENDI ■ NGC/82
Get angry, turn green, and, yes, SMASH your way through levels of puny soldiers. Also stealth with the rather more boring Bruce Banner.

IKARUGA — 85



ATARI ■ NGC/80
Classically old-style shooter – originally designed for robots, now available for human consumption. *Ikaruga* is very, very, very hard.

ISS 2 — 83

KONAMI ■ NGC/68
A winning formula mystifyingly tarnished with unnecessary 'improvements'. Still good – but also a step backwards.

ISS 3 — 78



KONAMI ■ NGC/82
The once-invincible football series sinks ever lower with a misguided new 'close-up' mode. And still no sign of *Winning Eleven 6* for Europe.

THE ITALIAN JOB: LA HEIST — 54



EIDOS ■ NGC/85
So short, even total games goobers should be able to finish it. The lack of variety doesn't help, either. A mini driving game in every respect.

JAMES BOND 007 AGENT UNDER FIRE — 70



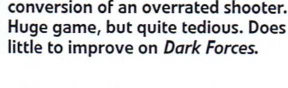
EA ■ NGC/70
Slog around workaday gameplay in off-the-peg shooter upholstery, shooting baddies with ping-pong balls. Strangely unsatisfying.

JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE — 72



EA ■ NGC/75
The best Bond game on GC so far – and done with some flair – but tasty visuals can't hide an FPS that's a little lacking overall.

JEDI KNIGHT II — 67



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
A seriously disappointing PC conversion of an overrated shooter. Huge game, but quite tedious. Does little to improve on *Dark Forces*.



TOP FIVE HALLOWEEN COSTUMES



HARRY POTTER
When we put this in first place, we don't mean it's the best. But you can guarantee that half the nation will be donning glasses, cloaks and pointy hats on the 31st like a tribe of devil-worshipping sheep reading a book SENT BY BEELZEBUB'S MUM HERSEL'.

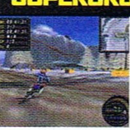
MUMMY
Raid a first-aid kit. Job done. (Note: if you only have a limited supply of bandages, wear regular clothes and wrap your face and hands and claim to be the Invisible Man.)

KLINGON
Chop the bottom layer of chocolate off a Mars bar and use the sticky inside to attach the rest to your forehead. Shout "Graaaah" a lot.

SKELETON
Simply peel the flesh from your skull using a sharpened potato peeler. Hah. Joke.

TRAMP
Frosty Jacks optional.

JEREMY MCGRATH SUPERCROSS WORLD — 20



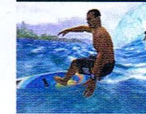
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/69
Like a horrible nightmare about doing cross-country wearing nothing but steel-wool pants and barbed-wire flip-flops.

JIMMY NEUTRON BOY GENIUS — 18



THQ ■ NGC/78
Tedious, sorry, devoid-of-inspiration 'puzzle' game ('Y'know – for kids!') that actually manages to out-borify *Universal Studios*.

KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER — 75



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/73
Same old nutritious trick-based extreme-sports diet as usual, but this time in tubes made of water. Actually quite good fun, for a while.

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2003 — 79



EA ■ NGC/75
If the more arcadey nature of *Rocky* doesn't sit all that well with you, then it's worth giving this face-smashing simulator a go.

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING — 47



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/69
The gimmick of bringing back old-skool 'rasslers' is nowhere near enough to make this any good. A shambolic licensing cash-cow.

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING II — 50



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/76
Practically the same game as above. Yet another travesty of a wrestling game, made only marginally better thanks to the likes of Big Daddy.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS — 68



EA ■ NGC/78
Repetitive hacking game with faint RPG overtones. Guide your man through endless levels making goblin prosciutto and orc sausages.

LOST KINGDOMS — 86



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/70
Collect, er, cards, and battle mythical monsters with them in pretty fantasy landscapes. The sequel does it a bit better, though.

LOST KINGDOMS II — 87



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/81
This sequel is set 200 years after the events of the first. It's a certifiably more satisfying experience, but it's still on the frothy side.

MADDEN NFL 2004 — 87



EA ■ NGC/85
Great stuff – a satisfying and user friendly version of the sport for both newbies and experienced Yankee Egg Chasers.



MARIO PARTY 4 — 68

NINTENDO ■ NGC/75
Disappointing stuff. It's not bad if you're in the mood for boardgame party fun, but it's done very little to improve on the originals.

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2 — 70

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Another decent-enough extreme sports sim. A bit slicker than *Dave Mirra*, but with smaller, tighter arenas. Does the job.

MEDAL OF HONOR FRONTLINE — 74

EA ■ NGC/75
Saving Private Ryan-style FPS set during World War II. Looks rather ropy in places, but it's atmospheric and highly enjoyable.

MEGA MAN NETWORK TRANSMISSION — 59

CAPCOM ■ NGC/84
Here's an idea: take a great GBA game, strip all the good bits out and put the resulting lame platformer on GC. Yeah, that's *brilliant*.

MEN IN BLACK II ALIEN ESCAPE — 45

ATARI ■ NGC/78
Rubbish off-the-peg third-person shooting game of the rubbish off-the-peg movie sequel. Did we say it was rubbish?

MICRO MACHINES — 57

ATARI ■ NGC/78
Like the recipe for bread or wine gums, *Micro Machines* doesn't change much, and this iteration is certainly no exception.

MINORITY REPORT — 39

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/77
Astonishingly brutal third-rate ass-whupping game that takes place on the sets of a Spielberg movie. Utterly, relentlessly violent.

MORTAL KOMBAT DEADLY ALLIANCE — 80

MIDWAY ■ NGC/77
The best *Kombat* yet! The spine-ripping, blood-feasting yarn finally gets the update it deserves on Gamecube. Finish him!

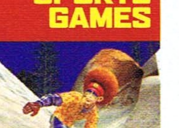
MX SUPERFLY — 63

THQ ■ NGC/73
An MX game that handles like you're driving space bikes on the surface of the moon. The best of a very bad bunch, though.

MYSTIC HEROES — 71

THQ ■ NGC/75
Simplistic, repetitive 3D *Gauntlet*-style slash-'em-up that's somehow strangely entertaining and charming. Well, Geraint thinks so.

TOP FIVE EXTREME SPORTS GAMES



SSX TRICKY
Sliding down a mountain pulling tricks – extreme sports at its finest, even if it is a blatantly obvious PS2 conversion.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3
The birdman of Carlsbad's finest moment. If you want a skateboarding sim, get this one.

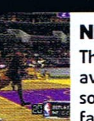
TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4
Doesn't have enough new stuff to be better than *THPS3*, but it does finally see the end of those annoying time limits.

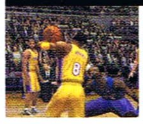
AGGRESSIVE INLINE
Tricking on rollerboots means you've got your hands free for extra-cool stuntery.

EVOLUTION SKATEBOARDING
Back to the board – the best extreme sports require a plank, it would seem.

NBA 2K3 — 85

ATARI ■ NGC/79
A titan of a basketball game that puts all others to shame. Great gameplay complements a brilliantly engrossing Career mode.

NBA COURTSIDE 2002 — 79

NINTENDO ■ NGC/68
The second-best basketball sim available, but it's still lacking somewhat. Strictly for hardcore fans of the Ball of B.

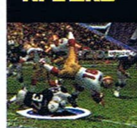
NBA LIVE 2003 — 70

EA ■ NGC/75
The predictable common-or-garden yearly EA update. Solid gameplay; lots and lots of lovely numbers; not much different from last year.

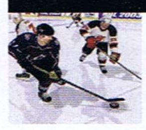
NBA STREET VOL 2 — 88

EA ■ NGC/85
A cracking basketball game that almost negates the need for realistic sports sims. And all for half the price of real basketball trainers.

NEED FOR SPEED 2 HOT PURSUIT — 69

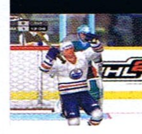
EA ■ NGC/74
Ironically slow, sluggish, speed-free racer. Yet another lazy port that's ruined what was originally a pretty entertaining franchise.

NFL 2K3 — 86

ATARI ■ NGC/79
A meaty gridiron sim that's a real threat to the *Madden* franchise. Bags of management roughage don't detract from the gameplay.

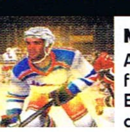
NHL 2003 — 64

EA ■ NGC/75
A more realistic approach to ice hockey which, while decent enough, isn't particularly fast or – more importantly – fun.

NHL 2004 — 57

EA ■ NGC/85
Great behind-the-scenes additions don't compensate for the terrible frame rate on the ice. Like the real thing, play it at your peril.

NHL 2K3 — 72

ATARI ■ NGC/80
Massively complicated ice hockey title, with stodgy and unwieldy gameplay. In a similar vein to *NFL 2K3*, but doesn't quite pull it off.

NHL HITZ 20-02 — 79
MIDWAY ■ NGC/67
Exaggerated ice hockey title in a similar vein to Midway's *Red Card*, where the sticks aren't just there for hitting the puck.

NHL HITZ 20-03 — 65

MIDWAY ■ NGC/74
Another year, another dose of frantic ice action. Still better than EA's take on the game – not much cop on the original, mind.

PAC-MAN WORLD 2 — 70

EA ■ NGC/78
The Pac is back for some hilarious retro-themed platforming fun. Shamelessly pilfers absolutely everything from *Mario 64*.

PIKMIN — 86

NINTENDO ■ NGC/80
Created using textures from Shigsy's own garden. A wonderful real-time strategy with multi-coloured vegetable men.

P.N.03 — 77

CAPCOM ■ NGC/84
This super-stylish shooter is only marred by dull bosses and design. But why *does* heroine Vanessa pull off those dance moves?

PRO RALLY 2002 — 58

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/74
An okay game completely and ruthlessly dragged down by its thoroughly awful, frustrating handling. Leave well alone.

PRO TENNIS WTA TOUR — 48

KONAMI ■ NGC/74
The only tennis game on Gamecube so far, but with rubbish non-analogue controls and some distinctly whiffy visuals.

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP — 74

SCI ■ NGC/78
Surprisingly solid, does nearly all the things a rallying game should. Should do the job until *Colin McCrae* finally sees the light of day.

RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC — 84

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/78
The limbless floppy-haired French Freak™ has the last laugh with a Rayman game that, insists our correspondent, is actually good.

RED CARD 20-03 — 78

MIDWAY ■ NGC/71
Violent football game where you mince opponents with stud and fist until the meat shows. Should be called *Roy Keane's Red Card 20-03*.

REIGN OF FIRE — 59

BAM ■ NGC/76
A poor game of an equally poor film, even if you do get to burn stuff. Some nice ideas ruined by dodgy physics and controls.



DIRECTORY

Every Gamecube game ever… rated!

RED FACTION II — 66



THQ ■ NGC/82
Shoot decadent capitalist scum in the face, and maybe blow some holes in walls too, in this distinctly average brown fighting game.

RESIDENT EVIL ZERO — 85



CAPCOM ■ NGC/78
Resi Zero ditches the old solo formula for a two-character system. Great set-pieces, looks lovely… it's more *Resi*, basically.

RESIDENT EVIL 2 — 62



CAPCOM ■ NGC/81
Experience the shambling, undead terror of original PSone graphics! Revisit Leon, Claire and their blocky unwashed friends for just… £30?!

RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS — 65



CAPCOM ■ NGC/81
Braaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiinnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnsssssssssssssssssssssss! Etcetera.

ROBOTECH: BATTLECRY — 77



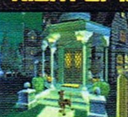
TDK ■ NGC/77
Stompy king-size robots go to war in the game of the crazy Japanese cartoon franchise. Not bad at all, as far as stompy robot games go.

ROCKY — 78



RAGE ■ NGC/74
A solid fighter where you guide Rockies one to five to punching greatness. Great two-player, loads of unlockable extras.

SCOOBY DOO NIGHT OF 100 FRIGHTS! — 36



THQ ■ NGC/74
Platforming non-action that will hold your interest no longer than half an hour, or until you need to go to the toilet; whichever comes first.

THE SCORPION KING — 30



[illegible]
Bad. Very bad. Guide a poor approximation of The Rock around and hit bad guys over and over until they bleed from the eyeholes.

SEGA SOCCER SLAM — 67



ATARI ■ NGC/74
Another cartoonish footie game with a major interest in violence and OTT moves. Cracking in multiplayer – poor on your own.

THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE — 52



EA ■ NGC/68
A really quite bad *Crazy Taxi* rip-off, with various Simpsons characters bolted on, spewing repetitive 'funny' one-liners.

THE SIMS — 81

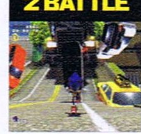
EA ■ NGC/79
Highly addictive people simulating comes to the Cube. A great sense of humour and endless potential for interior decoration and/or mischief.

SMUGGLER'S RUN WARZONES — 78



ROCKSTAR ■ NGC/73
Impressive, hee-uge landscapes and fast-paced 'racing' in buggies and jeeps are let down by repetitive gameplay and awful robot music.

SONIC ADVENTURE 2 BATTLE — 70



ATARI ■ NGC/67
Sega's annoying mascot on Gamecube, now with an extra dimension added for some reason. Does anyone care anymore?

SONIC ADVENTURE DX DIRECTOR'S CUT — 38



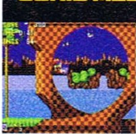
ATARI ■ NGC/83
A GBA link-up feature for the Cube, but otherwise a straight port of a game that was already rubbish to begin with. Enough is enough.

SPEED KINGS — 57



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/83
Wannabe *Burnout* with motorised velocipedes and, strangely, lots of sliding under lorries involved. Otherwise bland and unnecessary.

SONIC MEGA COLLECTION — 70



ATARI ■ NGC/79
If you have a hopeless retro arcade problem, you could do worse: seven Sonic games on one disc, accurate down to even the loading times!

SPIDER-MAN: THE MOVIE — 72



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/69
Dodgy control and camera issues are the only problems with this enjoyable platform adventure. Voiced by the original cast, too.

SPY HUNTER — 55



MIDWAY ■ NGC/68
Appaling frame-rate, nasty course design and dull linear racing make this one to avoid. Yet another pointless, crappy remake.

SPYRO: ENTER THE DRAGONFLY — 40



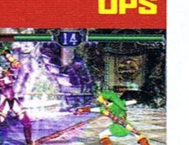
VIVENDI ■ NGC/75
Much like *Crash Bandicoot*, this is another shoddy port of a game that was never really much fun in the first place.

STAR WARS BOUNTY HUNTER — 68



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/77
The panting, pot-bellied, totally rubbish space-assassin gets the *Tomb Raider* treatment in this distinctly average game.

TOP FIVE BEAT-'EM-UPS



SOUL CALIBUR 2
The Rinkydink-starring fighter has only just come out in Blighty, but that's no excuse for not having it *right now*.

SUPER SMASH BROS. MELEE
All your favourite Ninty types pound seven shades of Shigsy out of one another. Not convinced? You can beat up Kirby. Yes!

DEF JAM VENDETTA
Putting the 'rap' into grappler, get sweaty and wrestly with Def Jam's finest. Wick.

MORTAL KOMBAT DEADLY ALLIANCE
An extra large scrapfest with extra gore, double blood and hold the mercy.

CAPCOM VS SNK 2 EO
Really needs a chunky controller to feel right, but is satisfying in a retro way nonetheless.

STAR WARS THE CLONE WARS — 71



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Enjoyable *Battlezone*-style tank blaster set around Episode II – not quite as good as *Rogue Leader*, but still fun all the same.

STARFOX ADVENTURES — 72



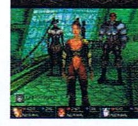
NINTENDO ■ NGC/74
Disappointing adventure that's way too easy and linear. Not awful, but should have been far better. Hardly a fitting send-off for Rare, either.

THE SUM OF ALL FEARS — 25



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/76
One of the most technically inept games we've ever played. Clancy says bury the copies in the Arizona desert before anyone notices.

SUMMONER A GODDESS REBORN — 68



THQ ■ NGC/79
As much levelling-up and numbers floating out of people's heads that you can eat. Crappy visuals, but a sprawling, engrossing adventure.

SUPER BUBBLE POP — 65



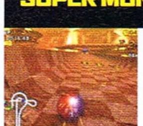
JALECO ■ NGC/78
Kind of *Tetris*-y flavoured *Bust-a-Move* for the Sunny Delight generation, with chemically-induced visuals and music. Wick.

SUPERMAN: SHADOW OF APOKOLIPS — 60



ATARI ■ NGC/81
Supes redeems himself somewhat with this serviceable, stylised and, most importantly, maze-free effort based on the animated cartoons.

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2 — 82



ATARI ■ NGC/78
The apes are back with levels even harder of core, and a mental new story mode involving love, betrayal and heinous banana-theft.

SX SUPERSTAR — 71



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/83
Fairly unassuming motocross scrambling, interestingly enhanced with a *Def Jam*-style Career mode than involves girlfriend upgrades.

TARZAN FREERIDE — 59



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/67
Disney. Platformer. Do we really need to say any more? Workaday, jungle-based gameplay with the Seventh Earl of Greystoke.

TAZ WANTED — 52



ATARI ■ NGC/72
Some of the worst level design we've ever seen in this middling, frustrating cel-shaded *Mario*-wannabe platformer.

DIRECTORY



Every Gamecube game ever... rated!

TETRIS WORLDS 38



THQ ■ NGC/73
THQ manage to ruin one of the Best Games Ever by trying to make it 'better'. Again. Will anyone stop these people before it's too late?

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003 82



EA ■ NGC/75
The world most efficient golf robot gets his own game. Actually really good, in a surprisingly arcadey way. Nice graphics, too.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004 84



EA ■ NGC/86
Ginormous plus humungous multiplied by golf. Apart from that and a few tweaks for stattoes, it's exactly the same as the last one.

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON 66



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/79
Clancy has yet another go at squad-based tactical ops, and this time things run a little bit more smoothly. Entertaining stuff.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3 87



ACTIVISION NGC/67
Mental grinds and stunts backed up by a mountain of hidden extras and vast skate parks – if you haven't tried *Hawk's*, now's the time.

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4 85



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
No time limits (hurrah!) and some great RPG elements and minigames complement the larger areas in *TH4* – a well-tweaked fourquel.

TOP ANGLER 35



XICAT ■ NGC/81
Generic fishing game, predictably involving bass, that doesn't even get the basics of its limited genre right. Somewhat tiresome.

TOP GUN: COMBAT ZONES 71



VIRGIN ■ NGC/72
Tail-riding, wingman-being movie-based flyboy antics. GC's only flight 'sim' – pretty challenging, but we recommend you try it first.

TUROK EVOLUTION 71



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/73
Relatively disappointing dino-hunting FPS sequel. Not as bad as *Turok 3* on the N64, but serious niggles let the series down badly.

TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER 60



EA ■ NGC/76
As average a platformer as you'll find, with an Antipodean twist. It's a solid example of the genre but nothing more or less.

PAUL'S SENSE TALK



BOVINE FIXATION
Haven't cows got pretty eyes? I tried pushing one over once, you know, but it's not as easy as one might think – like knocking a limpet off a rock, except with bigger turds

POINT MAKING
When discovering mid-flow that you are becoming doubtful of the point you are trying to make, just keep talking. People will soon stop listening, leaving you to walk away relatively unscathed.

DOG WALKING
My small, cute white pooch may not be the most masculine thing to be seen with, but he attracts cooing young women every time. The flipside to this is that he attracts old ladies too.

FACIAL HAIR
I've said it before and I'll say it again, it's not the beard on the outside, it's the beard on the inside that counts.

SMALL PERSON STALKING
I have a fixation, a pixie fixation, a pixation if you will. I don't know what it is about them, maybe it's the way they scamper about. I might marry one.

Do you have more 'sense' than our Sense Master Paul Edwards? Probably! He wants your Sense Talks, mate! Send them to him at paul.edwards@futurenet.co.uk or to Sense Talk at the usual address.

UFC THROWDOWN 51



UBI SOFT ■ NGC/73
Highly amusing freestyle thump-fest, where you lead your oily, grunting man to victory in some vague Greek-style athletic contest.

UNIVERSAL STUDIOS 24



KEMCO ■ NGC/67
Anyone who makes a game that has you picking up rubbish deserves to be shot in the kneecaps, stuffed into a suitcase and hurled into the sea.

V-RALLY 3 68



ATARI ■ NGC/82
Speedy rallying game that wouldn't be so much of a terrible drag if they could have concentrated on the basics first. Like, er, the steering.

WARIO WORLD 86



NINTENDO ■ NGC/83
The drunken, purple-nosed anti-Mario gets his own game at last. A funtastic, surreal frenzy of lowbrow humour and monster-hitting. Waah!

VIRTUA STRIKER 3 V2002 55



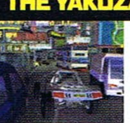
ATARI ■ NGC/69
Nice to look at, horrible to play. Rubbish AI and unwieldy controls make for a crap game of footie. Did we say it looked nice?

WORMS BLAST 63



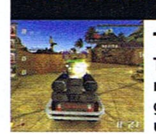
UBI SOFT ■ NGC/74
Annelids go to war (again). Kinda like *Bust-a-Move* in a puzzly-action kind of way, except this isn't anywhere near as good.

WRECKLESS THE YAKUZA MISSIONS 51



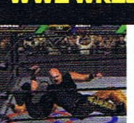
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Drive around like a lunatic and smash up cars and everything else that gets in your way. Sub-*Burnout* road-accident nonsense.

WWE CRUSH HOUR 43



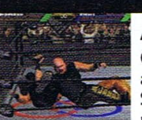
THQ ■ NGC/83
Those magnificent greasy fighting men climb aboard magnificent greasy fighting machines for some unlikely *Vigilante 8*-style 'thrills'.

WWE WRESTLEMANIA X8 70



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72
Okay wrestler, but with nothing particularly new and a way-too-familiar engine. Still, if you must insist in buying these things...

WWE WRESTLEMANIA XIX 68



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/85
Clumsy interface, limited CAW parts and truly irritating Story mode. Still, it'll sell by the shedload, no matter what its flaws are.

X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION 55



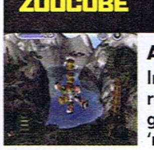
ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75
Duller than dishwater. Fighting-by-numbers stuff that offers very little of interest. Total waste of a pretty cool licence, too.

X-MEN 2 WOLVERINE'S REVENGE 64



ACTIVISION ■ NGC/82
Is he a man? Is he a wolf? Is he a genetically engineered awol super-soldier with hillbilly hair? Stodgy fighting with the clawed X-Man.

ZOOCUBE 50



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/71
Insane puzzle game involving a rotating mouth that sucks animal genitals and goes 'moo', 'oink', 'roar', 'quack' and sometimes 'wah!'



EXPERT TIPS, TOUGH CHALLENGES, TRIVIA AND MORE

NGC EXTENDED PLAY

DON'T MISS...


NGC
30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW
MAILBOX
STAR LETTER
98
COLLECTION CORNER

...Michael Foster's scathing attack on our criticism of the Stars Catalogue. See, we do print complaints. P105

CONTENTS

A concise guide to the informative guts within...

TIPS EXTRA: We're not convinced by card collecting in any videogame, but we can tell you how to get them (p93).

△ **NEW GRINTENDO:** The Pikmin have taken over testing your terrible jokes. They're expendable, you see (p106).



THE TIPS YOU NEED FOR THE GAMES YOU'RE PLAYING...

TIPS EXTRA



MARIO GOLF: TOADSTOOL TOUR (US)

UNLOCK TARGET BULLSEYE TOURNAMENT
Press Start and Z at the title screen, then enter CEUFPXJ1 as a code.

UNLOCK HOLLYWOOD VIDEO TOURNAMENT
Press Start and Z at the title screen, then enter BJGQBULZ as a code.

UNLOCK CAMP HYRULE TOURNAMENT
Again, press Start and Z at the title screen, then enter 0EKW5G7U as a code.

UNLOCK MARIO OPEN TOURNAMENT
Press Start and Z at the title screen, then enter GGAA241H as a code.

UNLOCK SECRET CHARACTERS
Boo: get 50 birdies in Tournament mode and the ghost is yours.
Baby Bowser: complete the Birdie Challenge to unlock him.
Shadow Mario: beat Ring mode with one player for the ethereal Mazza.
Petey Piranha: complete all practice modes.

THE ITALIAN JOB

GROOVY GOODIES
When you successfully complete Story mode in this moderately entertaining – if somewhat short – driving game, you'll unlock all manner of treats. You can look forward to a photo gallery, a whole bunch of concept art, pre-production galleries and, um, some dull credits.

ALL CIRCUIT RACING CARS
If you can complete the game with an 'A' rank in all levels (not an easy task), then you'll unlock this.

EXTRA OPTIONS
This is a tough 'un and no mistake. You'll need to complete all circuit races in first place to unlock extra options at the Game Options menu.

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER: CHAOS BLEEDS
There are loads of hidden delights in this fair interpretation of the Buffy TV show. From a load of bonus characters to play in the multiplayer modes to new arenas and hidden 'DVD-style' extras. Here's a ripe selection of the best of them – you may well be able to find even more if you keep playing and slaying.



NGC READER KNOWLEDGE!

Go into any shop (mart) in Pokémon Ruby or Pokémon Sapphire and buy 10 Pokéballs at once to receive a shiny white premier ball. You've got to get everything, right?.
Olly Hammonds, Blandford Forum

SECRET MULTIPLAYER CHARACTERS
Female Vampire: complete mission one with a Slayer rating.
Zombie Skeleton: complete mission two with a Professional rating.
Dominatrix: complete mission seven with a Slayer rating.
Zombie Gorilla: complete mission 11 with a Professional rating.
Joss Whedon: complete mission 12 with a Professional rating to play as Buffy's dad (well, her creator anyway).

HIDDEN MULTIPLAYER ARENAS
Quarry: simply complete mission 11 with a Slayer rating.
Cemetery: complete mission two with a Slayer rating for this classic setting.
Initiative: complete mission eight with a Slayer rating.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS
Anthony Stewart Head: complete mission one for Giles.
Amber Benson: complete mission two.
Nicholas Brendan: complete mission three to hear beefcake Brendan.
Robin Sachs: complete mission four.

VOICE-OVER SESSIONS
James Marsters: complete mission six and learn how Spike speaks.
Anthony Stewart Head: complete mission seven to see this.
Amber Benson: complete mission eight.
Nicholas Brendon: complete mission nine.
Robin Sachs: complete mission ten.
Joss Whedon: complete mission 11.

FINDING NEMO

PUZZLING SOLUTION
Having trouble solving any of the slide puzzles? It's not too difficult... when you know how, of course. It's best to start from the top of the puzzle, then you can keep sliding and solving the puzzle from left to right as you work your way down. We found that to be the easiest way.

GOING FOR GOLD
There are a few things you can do to help yourself to win the Gold Starfish. Making sure you don't miss any of the bubble rings will help, as will putting all the coloured pebbles in their proper holes. You'll also need to bounce on all the bouncy things, win every race and destroy all enemies. It's quite a lot just to earn a Gold Starfish, but they do help you unlock a juicy amout of bonus levels, so the immense amount of effort involved does bring its own reward. Or so 'they' say.

WWE WRESTLEMANIA

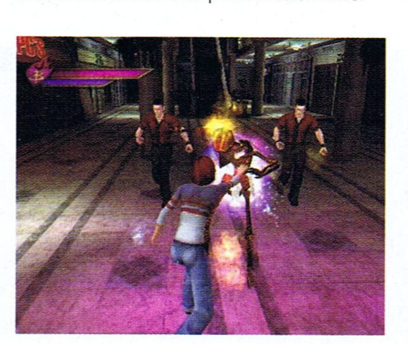
GET SOME DOSH
You'll get some extra money when you complete the Tutorial mode, but don't get too excited... it's not much, mind.

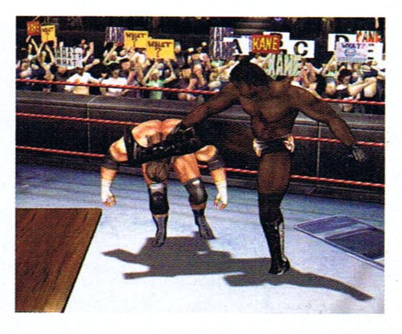
ALTERNATIVE COSTUMES
Every wrestler has an alternative costume, which you can access by pressing R or L at the wrestler selection screen just before starting a match.

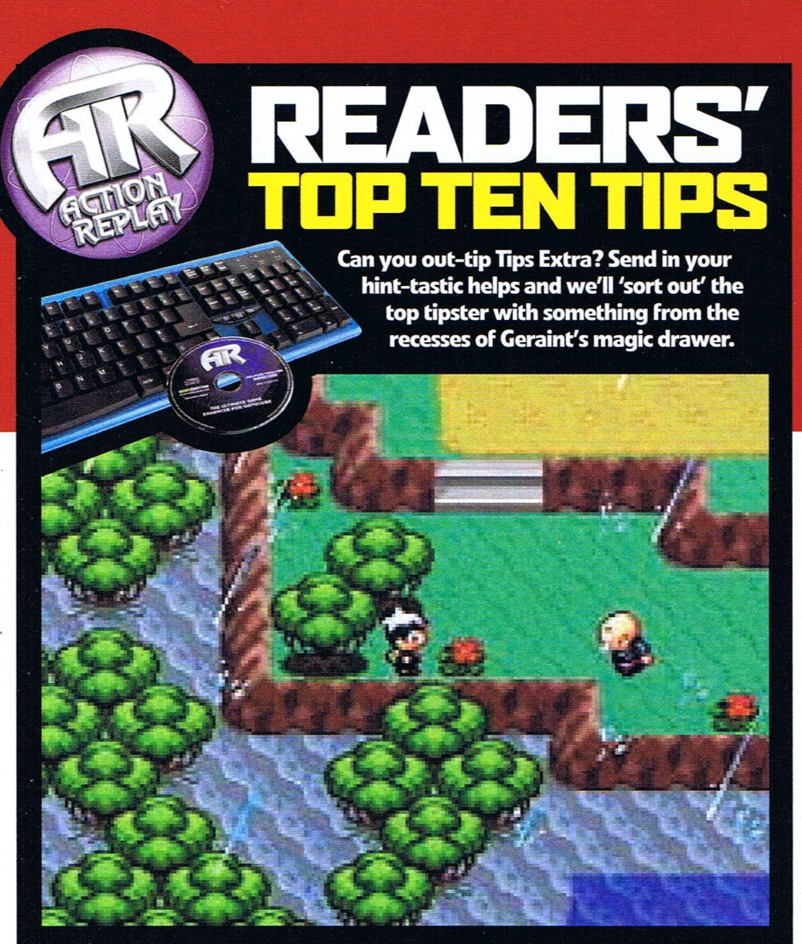
QUICK ROUTE TO BOSS
First you'll have to complete Revenge mode and then go back to the Mission Select screen. Done that? Good, now go to the last level in the Harbour (which is the easiest to complete) and you should find it quicker and easier to unlock the bosses.

EASY PEASY
A slightly cheaty but easy way to win a match is to keep hitting the same point on your opponent's body. If you keep doing this, then he should submit a lot faster.









READERS' TOP TEN TIPS

Can you out-tip Tips Extra? Send in your hint-tastic helps and we'll 'sort out' the top tipster with something from the recesses of Geraint's magic drawer.

1. POKÉMON
Little Ruby/Sapphire gem
Catch a Zigzagoon as early as you can, and always keep it in your team. Its special ability 'Pickup' means your team will be able to pick up scarce items such as Rare Candies and King Rocks.
Emile Sirrs, Newark

2. STARFOX ADVENTURES
Damage limitation
If you fall a long distance, repeatedly tap X. As he's about to hit the ground, Fox will roll and take no damage.
Craig Worton, Cookley

3. SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE
Super Gooper Blooper beater
For a quick way to defeat Gooper Blooper in Ricco Harbor, only pull off the front two tentacles, then tug on his mouth. Do this again and you're done.
Danny Page, Farnham

4. TIMESPLITTERS 2
Timewasters too
Check every ramp in the Robot Factory. Under one is a kart mini racer. (Hard mode only.) In Normal mode, in Siberia near the showers there's an Anaconda minigame on a shelf and finally, in Neo Tokyo in the lockers near the machine gun there's the Astrolander game.
Matthew Martindale, Co. Durham

5. SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE
Shine on, you crazy diamond
Go to Gelato Beach and, before you enter the land, turn right and you'll see a step. Go down it and squirt the floor. Eventually a picture of a shine sprite will appear and the shine will appear on one of the islands behind the lighthouse.
Philip Aspin, Gateshead

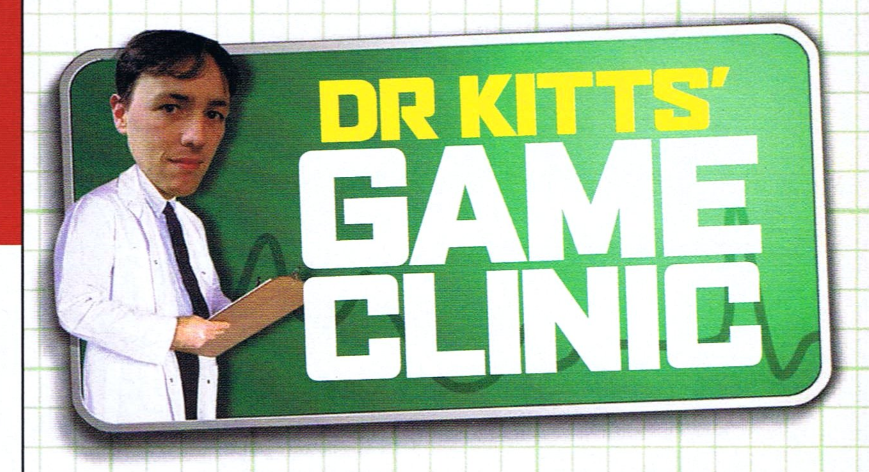
6. ZELDA: WIND WAKER
Seeing red
Go to Windfall Island. Before you go to the Forsaken Fortress a second time, visit the rich man with loads of vases. Talk to him and he'll throw three red rupees into the vases. Smash the vases, take the rupees and then turn off your Gamecube. Reload the game, play the Song of Passing twice and repeat.
James Biggins, Salisbury

7. JEDI OUTCAST
First knight
Walk up to a camera panel with your lightsaber, switch on your binoculars and then switch on the panel. Turn the panel off and you will be in first-person mode with your lightsaber.
Lewis Voigtländer-Ford, Milton Keynes

8. SUPER SMASH BROS
Whack the sack
In the Home Run contest, pick up the bat and knock the sand bag to the edge, holding down A and Right. The bag could fly as far as 150m – or more!
Ali Isaee, Hull

9. SUPER SMASH BROS
Ice, nice, baby
To use Ice Climbers in Home Run, use the hammer whirl (Up and A). When you've got two seconds left, smash attack it.
Christine Munro, Salford

10. ZELDA: WIND WAKER
Vandal!
Go to see the jar woman in Link's home town and break the jar she's carrying. She'll take 10 rupees from you – but it's worth it to wipe the smile off her face.
James Bowditch, Northwood





Forget red and blue pills. This doc only hands out suppositories.

Dr Kitts,
Is it just me, or are the Boos in *Mario Golf* really useless as players? They don't seem able to angle their shots to the left or right very well.
David Gruber, Norwich

Dr Kitts looks at both his unsanitary hands and sighs depressedly...
Did it ever occur to you that Boos have two arms? If you're playing and your Boo appears to have trouble making the ball curve in a certain direction, switch the club to his other arm and you should find it curves much more easily.

Dr Kitts,
I'm stuck on *WWE Wrestlemania XIX* – yeah, it's a wrestling game, but I like it, so help me, huh? Anyway, in the parking lot missions, I can't destroy Vince's truck. I get on it with the other wrestlers, but they always pound me through the roof.
Ben Lively, email

Dr Kitts rubs his knees and imagines Nurse Stephanie McMahon.
I know what is causing you pain – your wrestler is taking his opponents on in completely the wrong location. Go to the ledge above the truck and from there your wrestler should be able to use his special throw off move to dispose of his attackers, and the truck with them. Just remember, the traffic is still moving.

Dr Kitts,
I hate clowns! In fact, I really hate that annoying clown boss in *Wario World*. You know the one I mean – the one trundling around on the ball. Help me pound his ugly made-up face.
Mark Trevor, Manchester

Dr Kitts hates clowns too. Well, they're human, aren't they?
Wait for the painted freak to lob his exploding ball away and duplicate his head a few times, then punch him repeatedly. Piledrive him as soon as he gets dizzy. Grab the yellow sphere off the ball before he can throw the exploding ball at you. Keep doing this until he's clown and out.

Dr Kitts,
In *Star Wars Bounty Hunter*, how do I collect all the Jango Fett game cards?
Jordan O'Neill, email

Dr Kitts fishes his stethoscope out of the freezer.
Cards? Any more of that nonsense and I'll deal you the dead man's hand...
Are you still here? Collect all the feather icons to get all the cards. Now go away.





Fancy some classic codes? Ah, course you do. You love 'em…

BURNOUT 2

Master code
1 B916-7EWY-UGE3M
2 23X8-U3DK-WP68Q

Infinite boost
1 NPPC-EW8J-2KWT9
2 H9A5-5PBK-T13V2
3 8GXT-YBPR-NP2KD

Super acceleration
1 7YM9-03QJ-ARVF2
2 G681-QZAM-WYGFF
3 T1E5-F06B-27UZH
4 2EFX-CAVJ-A8HM1

Unlock all cars, races and cheats
1 B4DR-VF27-YB6NP
2 T5NM-WRTF-5GT7D

ZELDA: WIND WAKER

Master code
1 Z50W-FZRF-T1B95
2 M5RG-R3UK-4C251

Infinite Health
1 YG9H-1435-YE6RY
2 R0N6-65AP-8KRHR

Infinite Rupees
1 32GE-RHWV-B9PXM
2 PQYD-2Y5P-ZTZ8M

Massive Link
1 9662-65U2-97WMP
2 KKFN-85HK-D0J5J
3 DPUR-NC4A-WZ9Y7
4 T0U5-AGMM-DTUXV

Tiny Link
1 XVZ8-JYQB-PZPBE
2 Y37K-M7F5-HTV2P
3 4ANR-EKYG-09VYG
4 027M-KM3X-N7CXN

Moon Jump (Hold D-pad Down)
1 NV76-0QBE-X31M4
2 7FA4-0VUB-D4QGT
3 KZ21-VH3J-QY087

TIME SPLITTERS 2

Master code
1 WUP4-8R57-7CHWV
2 DA6Z-MKHK-31V6D

All story levels unlocked
1 MQER-2PN9-EVH0E
2 URDU-6PDA-0B327
3 3RVT-Z3CC-5AM7D
4 KHJU-4BFA-8V9KY

Infinite ammo/no reloads
1 38JF-YYK7-VGUWF
2 2ZD5-13NG-XA959
3 13ZU-JV7F-NFWUU

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE

Master code
1 ZFC2-E28Y-T8KBK
2 RFMY-G327-57MW4

P1 - No Damage
1 RHRQ-10UD-ZY8M2
2 728Q-W6D6-G8Q0T

P2 - No Damage
1 GGG8-YVVH-F6731
2 TT2H-87Q1-4386Y

P3 - No Damage
1 2FGR-XYZQ-JC4DZ
2 9MUQ-PZPJ-VUUVH

P4 - No Damage
1 PC2K-GHUR-CJ5RG
2 7B4V-CZ4C-CKBRU

Open All Characters
1 FBVP-6JV1-474FC
2 Y31F-BZ4Q-A0RVA

Bouncy pickups
1 0033-AKZW-EU9HE
2 7RYB-N3PZ-Z3CD2

Mega jumps
1 W7FK-055R-A99K9
2 7NAK-Y0N2-MWAMR

HITMAN 2

Master code
1 P703-663F-5CN8H
2 CHGV-WEG5-6FC6X

Infinite health
1 MAKE-V4D4-MBZ3E
2 JXYG-VUY7-RJ81Z

Infinite ammo/no reload
1 1DP3-KAHV-CBP9H
2 T5VU-3WKV-D2VPP
3 KY2G-CB61-K786Q

Infinite saves
1 CP4W-MNGN-JHFTD
2 HVJ3-NDW5-NNDRM

SUPER MONKEY BALL 2

Master code
1 UJGH-JP7J-D6MYK
2 9UW2-BDUF-AF009

Infinite time
1 6ZG0-RAQ8-V4QBE
2 TFFF-J8CM-JGWEW

Moon Jump (Hold B)
1 BCD8-9B4Z-PWN5Z
2 F7W7-98BZ-3Y5G4
3 VJUJ-UZQM-EW1KD

Cel shaded Ball
1 N8QY-NW3D-WW0PM
2 AD8Q-BE5C-WNKUX

Massive Balls
1 0EY4-5VMR-ZRKQY
2 G545-Z8XA-WG88C

Small Balls
1 3RRU-1BFQ-K064G
2 AB02-WZZY-PV90Y





YOUR TOP TIPS SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE AND BAG YOURSELF A PRIZE…

Found an interesting tip, secret or quirky thing in one of your games? Send it into us immediately! Each month we'll stick the best into our Readers' Tips section. If your tip is the number one readers' tip, we'll send you a luvverly prize. Good, huh? But don't send us cheat codes from the net. Quirky!



HERE'S MY TOP TIP…

IT'S FOR

AND THIS IS HOW IT WORKS

Name ....

Address ....

....

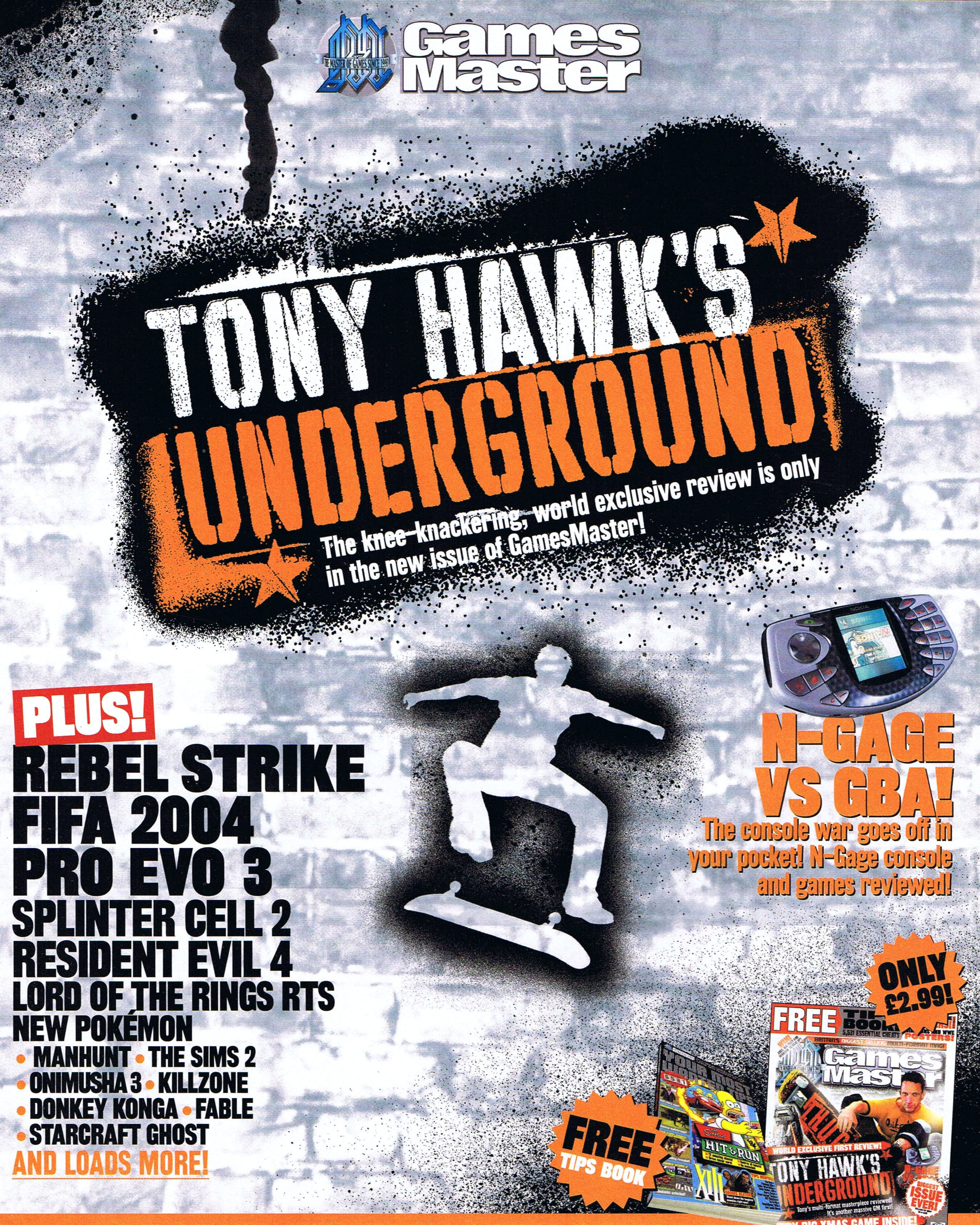
....

....

....Postcode

Send to:
TIPS EXTRA, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW or e-mail ngc@futurenet.co.uk

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room. Or just buy two copies of the mag. That way you can keep a spare copy in the khazi, to help focus your mind.



Games Master
TONY HAWK'S
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The knee-knackering, world exclusive review is only in the new issue of GamesMaster!
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SEE PAGE 100 FOR NEW CHALLENGES!

AND NOW… WITNESS THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF THESE ARMED AND FULLY OPERATIONAL GAMING LEAGUES!

I'M THE BEST

WIN!



Welcome to I'm The Best, where you take on NGC readers in a test of gaming skill. Whether you're very good at one game or ace at many, there's a challenge here for you. If you're new to ITB and want to enter, here's what to do:

- You must be an individual. No team efforts.
- Beat the To Qualify minimum to get the points for a challenge. Make sure you follow the rules for the challenge – it may specify a mode or difficulty setting.
- You only get the points for each challenge once, but you can re-enter challenges to improve your standing in the mini-tables.
- Send us the evidence asked for – video or proper photos only. NO DIGITAL PHOTOS.
- Send in a form with your scores on or write the names of the challenges you're entering and your scores on a sheet of paper.
- Make sure your entry reaches us before any specified cut-off date. Some challenges are only open for a month.
- You can only enter the NEW challenges on page 100, Kittsy's Karnival of Killing, Virtual Reality You, Mission Impossible and David Gosen's Inhuman Gaming Efficiency Directive this issue. All the old challenges are CLOSED.

We've got hundreds of people sending in entries each month. We keep track of everyone's points, so if you earn more points, we'll add them to your total – can you make it onto the overall scoreboard?

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE!

What is Mission Impossible? An indescribably convoluted film starring Tom Cruise that has an entertaining copter-in-the-channel tunnel sequence or an entertaining monthly challenge? Well, both. But our version doesn't star Mr Nicole Kidman.

Your mission? To follow our instructions to the letter, however keeerazy they may be. And it could be anything. We've lowered the points for this so that we could award them to every correct entry, not just the first one we get…

THIS MONTH…

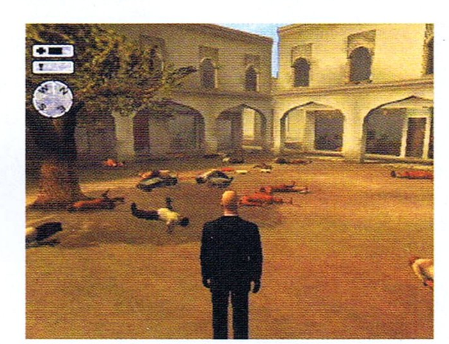
BODIES ART

Hitman 2. Where else, apart from Damien Hurst's studio, does senseless violence and art collide? This month we're taking Mission Impossible to new levels of depravity. We want you to spell out 'I'm the Best!' in dead bodies. Yup, you heard right. Dead. Bodies. We've done a similar thing before now to spell out **NGC**. You can choose any level to do it in – we recommend picking a heavily-populated one.

NAKED KILLER

Not tough enough for you? The ever-generous Kittsy has even decided to award **five bonus points** if you strip all the bodies naked for the letters and use women for the exclamation mark. (You cannot strip the women. It has been tried. Bunch of bleedin' deviants round here…)

We must receive your entry for this by the **20th November**. All entries that spell out 'I'm the Best!' correctly using the dead bodies will get **20 lovely shiny points, plus there's an extra five points for anyone who manages Kittsy's request.** Oh, and send us **video evidence only** please. We get a depraved sort of pleasure from seeing how you arrange things.

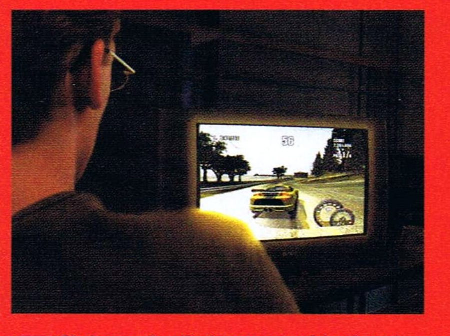






BEAT THE BEST!

Come and have a go if you think they're hard enough! This is how you turn your talent into a shot at a stonking prize.



1 Ditch your family, ignore your friends and practice until you have achieved perfection. But not beyond the cut-off date. That'd be dim.

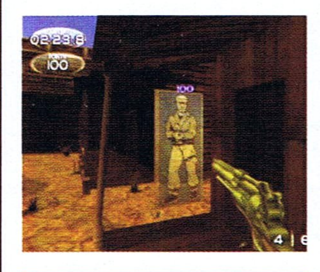


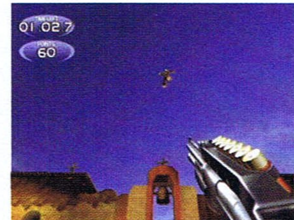
2 Get a score above our 'To Qualify' minimum – you don't have to beat the top 5. Gather the evidence (video/photo) and send it to us.



3 Wait an issue or two and see where your score gets you. The more challenges you nail, the higher you climb in the table…

TIMESPLITTERS 2





CUT 'EM OUT!

WE WANT Your highest score in the Take 'Em Down challenge.
THE LAW You have to complete the level, busters.
TO QUALIFY 500 points.
EVIDENCE A pic of the final screen showing your score and the fact that you've finished.
POINTS 20

THIS CHALLENGE IS NOW CLOSED

1	4300	"PH" Hughes, M. Pellett, "Sphinx" Pugh, L. Voigtländer-Ford, Bryan Docherty, Simon Mason, Dave Every, Sam Rogerson
2	4275	Michael Rothwell, Mr S, Barry Lewis, Bruce Livings
3	4250	Rex McGee, Trowbridge; Thomas Cox, Birchington
4	4175	David McDonald, Warwick
5	4150	J Leverett, Great Yarmouth

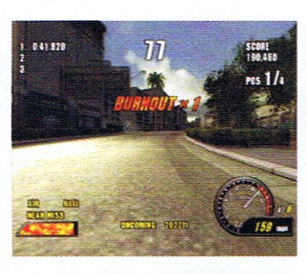
MONKEY MARKSMAN

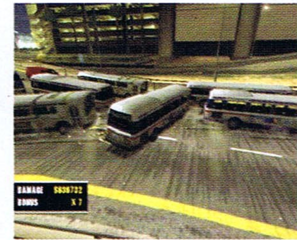
WE WANT Your highest score in the Simian Shoot-Out challenge.
THE LAW None, as such. Just kill as many monkeys as you can. With extreme prejudice.
TO QUALIFY 2000 points.
EVIDENCE A pic of the final results screen.
POINTS 25

THIS CHALLENGE IS NOW CLOSED

1	4080	Rex McGee, Trowbridge
2	3910	Sam Rogerson, Milton Keynes
3	2975	Martyn Heule, Haarlem
4	2925	Lewis Voigtländer-Ford, Milton Keynes
5	2865	Bryan Docherty, Gourock

BURNOUT 2





CHAIN DRIVER

WE WANT Your highest chain, as the name would suggest.
THE LAW You can do this on any track, in Time Attack mode.
TO QUALIFY You have to have racked up at least 9 chains.
EVIDENCE A pic of your player profile screen will do for this.
POINTS 20

THIS CHALLENGE IS NOW CLOSED

1	734	Phil "PH" Hughes, Cheshire
3	94	Matthew Pellet, Spalding
2	83	J. Gallagher, Bourne End
3	36	Chris Fletcher, Stockport; Tom Newell, Inverness; Bryan Docherty, Gourock
4	35	Matt D, Hailsham; Dave Every, Ellesmere Port

DOLLAR KILLS

WE WANT The highest amount of damage, in dollars, on the Out Of Control Tower Crash Scenario.
THE LAW You can use any car you like.
TO QUALIFY $50,000,000
EVIDENCE A pic of the final results screen
POINT 20

THIS CHALLENGE IS NOW CLOSED

3	$454,630,400	Matthew Pellet, Spalding
1	$332,262,656	Michael Rothwell, Wallasey
2	$270,162,912	Bryan Docherty, Gourock
2	$128,990,568	Thomas Cox, Birchington
3	$109,378,568	David Williamson, Bathgate

To spice things up a bit, you'll notice that we've also included extraneous Random Challenges – which can be related to games, or be completely whimsical. Again, fulfil our wishes to the letter and points will be yours. Simple. There's even a Spot the Ball competition (it's FIFA this month, but it can be anything ball related. Or not). Keray-zee…

VIRTUAL REALITY YOU!

Prats win prizes!

THIS MONTH JUST PEACHY

We've been kind to you. Too kind, we think, throwing 70 points around willy-nilly. Now we're issuing a challenge that will really separate the boys from the men. If the men wear dresses, that is. Because this month we want you to be everyone's favourite blonde. Send us a picture of yourself **dressed as Peach, complete with pink dress, long blonde hair and tiara, holding a loaf of bread in a bakery**. If you can't get to a proper baker's shop, we will settle for the bread section of your local supermarket, but someone's kitchen won't count. Entries we receive by 20th November win 70 points.

PIKMIN





GREEN FINGERS #1

WE WANT The highest score in Distant Spring.
THE LAW In Challenge mode, grow as many Pikmin as you can.
TO QUALIFY 300 Pikmin.
EVIDENCE Pic of the results table.
POINTS 20

THIS CHALLENGE IS NOW CLOSED

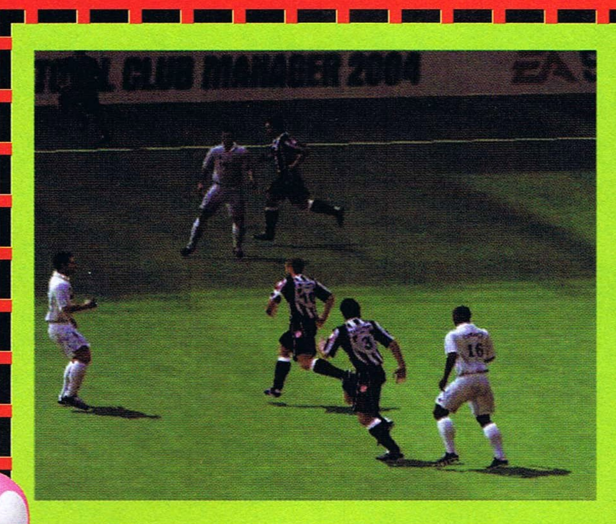
1	636	Michael Harvey, Ellesmere Port
5	426	Dermot Ryan, Mullingar
2	399	Dave "Sphinx" Pugh, Saffron Walden
4	359	Matthew Pellett, Spalding
3	352	Rex McGee, Trowbridge

GREEN FINGERS #2

WE WANT The highest score in Forest of Hope.
THE LAW In Challenge mode, grow as many Pikmin as you can.
TO QUALIFY 300 Pikmin.
EVIDENCE Pic of the results table.
POINTS 20

THIS CHALLENGE IS NOW CLOSED

2	569	Michael Harvey, Ellesmere Port
2	481	Dave "Sphinx" Pugh, Saffron Walden
1	458	Andrew McGrae, Southport
5	426	Dermot Ryan, Mullingar
2	414	Dave Every, Ellesmere Port



FIFA 2004 SPOT THE BALL

X MARKS THE SPOT

A return to form after last month's lunacy (no-one worked out exactly which desk is supposed to be Paul's, so we had to give it to a very distant "closest" x). As usual, we want you to take a guess at where the spherical object should be – and no, we don't mean Bolton's Mario Jardel. Write an x where you think the ball is and send in your entry. (We will accept photocopies if you don't want to cut out your magazine.)

❑ The entry we receive marking the point closest to the ball by Thursday 20th November wins **40 points.**

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO… I'M THE BEST, NGC MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

I'M THE BEST

The Best just got even Better…

METROID PRIME





THE FULL METROID

WE WANT Your fastest time completing the entire game.
THE LAW Collect at least 50% of all items.
TO QUALIFY 9 hours.
EVIDENCE A photo of the results screen.
POINTS 60

THIS CHALLENGE IS NOW CLOSED

1	1:49h (yes, really!)	**Andrew Mills** Dundee
2	4:10h	**Dave Every** Ellesmere Port
3	4:32h	**David Williamson** Bathgate
4	5:01h	**Dermot Ryan** Mullingar
5	5:25h	**David McDonald** Warwick

STATION ESCAPE

SOOO… How quickly can you escape from the space station as it goes into meltdown?
THE LAW No cheats!
TO QUALIFY At least 3:16 remaining.
EVIDENCE Video
POINTS 15

1	4:09m	**Andrew Mills** Dundee
2	4:04m	**Dave Every** Ellesmere Port
3	3:55m	**Bryan Docherty** Gourock
4	3:50m	**Matthew Pellett**, Spalding **Chris Fletcher**, Stockport
5	3:49m	**H Rooney-Nugent**, London **Tiarnan Mc Nulty**, Co Tyrone

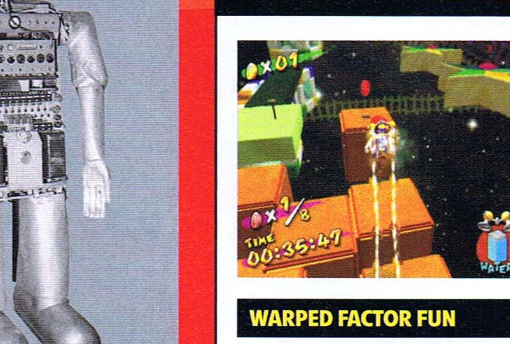
DAVID GOSEN'S INHUMAN GAMING EFFICIENCY DIRECTIVE

1011101010110010110110… SYNTAX ERROR! SYNTAX ERROR! "Everyone is inferior to Geraint" does not compute. It is illogical. Once again I am offering 101.01 'points' to whoever can:

In Soul Calibur 2's original Survival mode (not the Extra Survival mode), survive 20 bouts using Taki. The average time per bout must be under 10 seconds. Your total time must be less than three minutes and 20 seconds.

I require video evidence of this. Otherwise I shall be forced to accept the Celtic meat-thing's explanation that he has "mad skillz". ERROR!

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE





WARPED FACTOR FUN

WE WANT Your fastest time on the Hillside Cave Secret.
THE LAW This is the 'secret Shine', where you have to collect the Red coins within a time limit.
TO QUALIFY At least eight seconds remaining.
EVIDENCE A picture of the screen once you've collected the coins, clearly showing your time.
POINTS 15

1	32:63s	**Tiarnan Mc Nulty** Co Tyrone
2	30:20s	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding
3	30:04s	**Phil "PH" Hughes** Cheshire
4	26:64s	**Rob Jones** Poole
5	25:80s	**Thomas Cox** Birchington

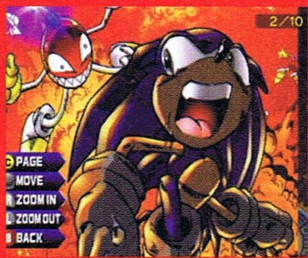
COINING IT IN

WE WANT Your highest tally of coins on the Bianco Hills level.
THE LAW Choose any Story.
TO QUALIFY Get AT LEAST 110 coins (as netting 100 coins bags you a Shine).
EVIDENCE A picture of the totals screen (press Z to get it) clearly showing your total coin tally for Bianco Hills.
POINTS 20

THIS CHALLENGE IS NOW CLOSED

1	212	**Phil "PH" Hughes**, Cheshire, **Matthew Pellett**, Spalding
2	202	**Steve Brooks** Broughton Astley
3	200	**Dermot Ryan** Mullingar
4	198	**Dave Every** Ellesmere Port
5	192	**David Williamson** Bathgate

SONIC MEGA COLLECTION



GREEN HILL SKILLZ

WE WANT Your fastest time in driving a blue rodent in a left-to-right fashion on the Green Hill zone, Act 1.
THE LAW You must finish with at least 150 rings.
TO QUALIFY You need to have a time of less than 4 minutes [illegible] you can do it.
EVIDENCE Pic of the status screen.
POINTS 15

THIS CHALLENGE IS NOW CLOSED

1	0:36m	**Lewis Voigtländer-Ford** Milton Keynes
2	0:43m	**Lee Graham** Bristol
3	0:50m	**Jason Leverett** Great Yarmouth
4	0:57m	**David Cathrine** Edinburgh
5	1:00m	**Ross Main**, **Julia McClay**, **Chris Fletcher**

ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER



FREE FLIGHT

WE WANT The longest flight in the Birdman contest.
THE LAW Go to the platform east of Dragon Roost Island, and fly. Like a bird.
TO QUALIFY A flight of at least 250 [illegible] you in the running.
EVIDENCE Take a picture when the Rito mentions your score or your record score.
POINTS 20

1	423yds	**Josh Jones** Barnstaple
2	415yds	**Tiarnan Mc Nulty** Co Tyrone
3	411yds	**Larry Furness/Iain Madder** Cyberspace
4	306yds	**Adam Weston** Ballycranbeg
5	272yds	**Josh Ryan** Dursley

SSX TRICKY



SNOWOFF

WE WANT Your highest score in the Showoff event.
THE LAW You have to use the Elysium Alps course. You can use any boarder, but only with the default board.
TO QUALIFY 75,000 points.
EVIDENCE A pic of the results.
POINTS 15

THIS CHALLENGE IS NOW CLOSED

1	1,107,675	**Phil "PH" Hughes** Cheshire
2	1,082,735	**Steve Brooks** Broughton Astley
3	1,022,140	**Andrew Smith** Aberdeen
4	810,140	**Andrew McGrae** Southport
5	805,425	**Rex McGee** Trowbridge

FIFA 2003

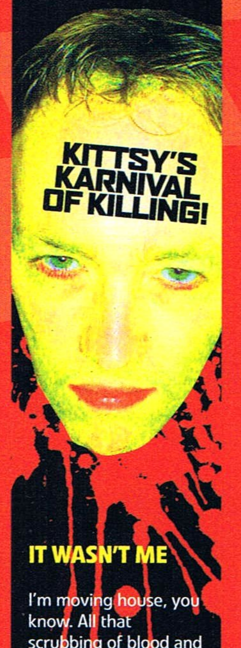


MADRID MASTER

CAN YOU Thump Real Madrid?
THE LAW No memory cards; default settings; World Class difficulty; play a friendly as Ajax.
TO QUALIFY Win by three goals.
EVIDENCE Taped from the 'no memory card present' screen to the end of the match.
POINTS 15

1	9-1	**Josh Symons** Bristol
2	7-3	**Gareth Brownlow** Kilrea
3	6-2	**Matt Dyson** Southampton
4	3-0	**Matt D** Hailsham
5	5-2	**Michael Seaward** Stanley

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO… I'M THE BEST, NGC MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW



IT WASN'T ME

I'm moving house, you know. All that scrubbing of blood and removing of corpses just to get my bloody deposit back has completely knackered my killing arm. As a result I've taken to hiring minions to carry out my murderous whims and fancies. In celebration of my 'month off', then, I want you to do the following…

Playing *Freedom Fighters*, choose any level and try and complete it **with your buddies killing twice as many people as you do.**

Send in photographic evidence of their evil deeds as shown on the end-of-level results screen. All evidence must reach my desk by the 20th November to win **30 points**.



SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE

FUNGI TO BE WITH

WE WANT Your quickest time of the Mushroom Kingdom stage of Adventure mode (the first bit).
THE LAW Use any character.
TO QUALIFY There must be at least 36500 time remaining (the better the performance, the more time remains).
EVIDENCE A pic of the Stage Clear screen, which shows your time remaining.
POINTS 10

1	39400	**Phil "PH" Hughes** Cheshire
2	39000	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding
3	38900	**Dave Every** Ellesmere Port
4	38800	**Rob Jones**, Poole **Bryan Docherty**, Gourock
5	38700	**David Cathrine** Edinburgh

HERE COMES TROUBLE

WE WANT Your quickest time defeating Bowser on the Trouble King stage.
THE LAW None!
TO QUALIFY Beat Bowser in less than 25 seconds.
EVIDENCE A clear picture of your time on the Event Match menu.
POINTS 10

1	7:90s	**Rex McGee** Trowbridge
2	8:48s	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding
3	8:55s	**Phil "PH" Hughes** Cheshire
4	9:08	**Dermot Ryan** Mullingar
5	10:65s	**David Williamson** Bathgate

THIS CHALLENGE IS NOW CLOSED



IKARUGA

ROBOT CHALLENGE #1

WE WANT Your highest chain on the first level.
THE LAW The three laws of robotics. Possibly.
TO QUALIFY A chain of [illegible]
EVIDENCE A picture of the final results screen with you score displayed.
POINTS 35

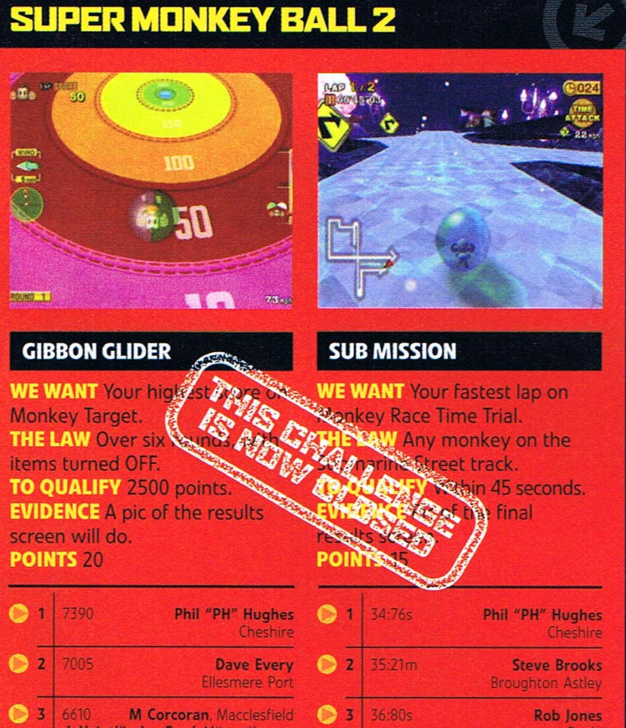
1	115	**Steve Brooks** Broughton Astley
2	111	**Gareth Brownlow** Kilrea
3	105	**Phil "PH" Hughes** Cheshire
4	95	**Rob Jones** Poole
5	86	**Janne Kaitila** Finland

ROBOT CHALLENGE #2

WE WANT Your fastest time defeating the boss on Level 2 (your time remaining).
THE LAW Moore's law.
TO QUALIFY 70 seconds remaining on the clock.
EVIDENCE Pic of the explosion at the end with the time displayed.
POINTS [illegible]

1	83s	**Phil "PH" Hughes** Cheshire
2	81s	**Rob Jones** Poole
3	75s	**Steve Brooks** Broughton Astley
4	73s	**Bruce Livings** Watford
5	72s	**Gareth Brownlow**, **Janne Kaitila**, **Chris Fletcher**, **Dave Every**

THIS CHALLENGE IS NOW CLOSED



SUPER MONKEY BALL 2

GIBBON GLIDER

WE WANT Your highest score on Monkey Target.
THE LAW Over six rounds, with items turned OFF.
TO QUALIFY 2500 points.
EVIDENCE A pic of the results screen will do.
POINTS 20

1	7390	**Phil "PH" Hughes** Cheshire
2	7005	**Dave Every** Ellesmere Port
3	6610	**M Corcoran**, Macclesfield **L Voigtländer-Ford**, Milton Keynes
4	6430	**Simon Mason** West Parley
5	5910	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding

SUB MISSION

WE WANT Your fastest lap on Monkey Race Time Trial.
THE LAW Any monkey on the Submarine Street track.
TO QUALIFY Within 45 seconds.
EVIDENCE Pic of the final results screen.
POINTS 15

1	34:76s	**Phil "PH" Hughes** Cheshire
2	35:21m	**Steve Brooks** Broughton Astley
3	36:80s	**Rob Jones** Poole
4	37:50	**Simon Mason** West Parley
5	38:94m	**Michael Seaward** Stanley

THIS CHALLENGE IS NOW CLOSED

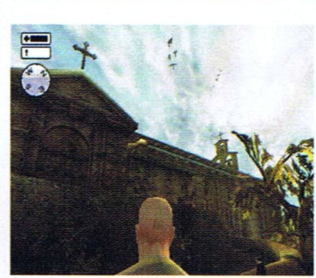
RESIDENT EVIL ZERO

SON OF A LEECH

WE WANT You to collect as many leeches as you can in Leech Hunter.
THE LAW Complete the main game!
TO QUALIFY Collect at least 25 leeches of both colours.
EVIDENCE Photo of the stat screen showing your leech total.
POINTS 35

1	50/50	**Rob Jones**, Poole **Phil "PH" Hughes**, Cheshire
2	49/49	**Chris Fletcher**, Stockport **Matthew Pellett**, Spalding
3	49/48	**Dave Every** Ellesmere Port
4	41/42	**Josh Jones** Barnstaple
5	32/32	**Bryan Docherty** Gourock

HITMAN 2



SPEED KILLER

WE WANT Your fastest time eliminating the target on the Anathema mission.
THE LAW You must achieve a Silent Assassin rating! No killing civilians or raising alarms.
TO QUALIFY 15 minutes.
EVIDENCE Pic of the status screen.
POINTS 40

1	2:32m	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding
2	3:13m	**David Williamson** Bathgate
3	3:14m	**Simon Mason** West Parley
4	4:19m	**Barry Lewis** Dairsie
5	4:59m	**Lee Graham** Bristol

THIS CHALLENGE IS NOW CLOSED

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO… I'M THE BEST, NGC MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

I'M THE BEST

The Best just got even Better…



SOUL CALIBUR 2

SOUL SURVIVOR

WE WANT You to survive as long as you can.
THE LAW Use any character in Basic Survival mode, but with their basic weapon.
TO QUALIFY 35 wins
EVIDENCE Pic of the final summary screen.
POINTS 30

1	00	**Your fight-lovin' name here?** C'mon, enter this challenge!
2	00	**Your fight-lovin' name here?** It's a really ace game…
3	00	**Your fight-lovin' name here?** Enter! Enter! Enter!
4	00	**Your fight-lovin' name here?** Please?
5	00	**Your fight-lovin' name here?** Eeeeeeennnnnnterrrrrrr!

TIMED TO DIE

WE WANT Your fastest Standard Time Attack.
THE LAW Use any character, but with their basic weapon (ie, no Soul Edges and the like).
TO QUALIFY 3:30m
EVIDENCE Pic of the final summary screen.
POINTS 30

1	2:22:75m	**Andy Whittle** Leigh
2	2:32:71m	**Steve Brooks** Broughton Astley
3	2:45:10m	**James Partridge** Staffordshire
4	2:50:63m	**Gareth Cole** Hucknall
5	2:52:44m	**Matthew Pellett** Spalding

NEW CHALLENGES NOW RUNNING

With so many entries flooding in before the deadline, we're keeping your names up for another month. In the meantime, here are the new challenges.

F-ZERO GX

COSMO TERMINAL CARNAGE

WE WANT The highest possible kill count on Cosmo Terminal.
THE LAW You have to use the Golden Fox in the Grand Prix on Master Difficulty. Oh, and you have to win. In the event of a tie, we'll take the fastest race time as the deciding factor.
TO QUALIFY: 15 kills
EVIDENCE: Video evidence only please. We want to see you selecting Master difficulty from the pre-Grand Prix set up.
POINTS: 35

F-ZERO GX

AEROPOLIS: TIME ATTACK

WE WANT Your fastest race time down Aeropolis: Multiplex.
THE LAW You can use any original vehicle you like. No custom machines allowed.
TO QUALIFY: 2'28"000
EVIDENCE: A shot of the Time Attack ranking table that you get after completing your run. You are not, repeat, NOT to use the tie from your records data. Comprendez? If you do, you'll be disqualified.
POINTS: 30

HITMAN 2

THE HAYAMOTO HIT

WE WANT Your fastest time on the 'Tracking Hayamoto' level.
THE LAW You must achieve a Silent Assassin rating. No dead civilians or ringing alarms.
TO QUALIFY: 5:00
EVIDENCE: A clear picture of the final status screen will be fine and dandy for this 'un.
POINTS: 45

SSX 3

PEAK TWO TRIAL

WE WANT Your fastest time down the second Peak's 'Peak 2 Race'.
THE LAW You have to use Kaori, but you can use any equipment and you can configure her stats however you please.
TO QUALIFY: 15:00
EVIDENCE: Video only please – we want to see you selecting Transport from the game's Pause menu then, in Select Race Event, choosing the required event and boarding all the way to the finish.
POINTS: 25

SOUL CALIBUR 2

TIME ROTH

WE WANT Your fastest time for the standard Time Attack.
THE LAW You have to use Astaroth, and you're not allowed to play the 'Extra' version of the mode. If you do, you're disqualified.
TO QUALIFY: 5 minutes
EVIDENCE: A simple snap of the Time Attack ranking screen will do nicely. But remember, NO DIGITAL PHOTOS ALLOWED.
POINTS: 25

SOUL CALIBUR 2

CHAIN IMPACT

WE WANT You to guard impact as many successive attacks as you can before you get hit.
THE LAW Guard Impact chains will be broken if you get hit, thrown or if you do a standard guard against an attack. We WILL allow escaped throws, however, and you can avoid as many attacks as you like. We need to see the opening bout of Arcade mode, so make sure you include the selection of this mode on your tape. NO 'Versus' battles.
TO QUALIFY: 10 consecutive chains.
EVIDENCE: Video of a single bout only, please.
POINTS: 35

IKARUGA

ROBOT CHALLENGE #3

WE WANT Your highest chain on the third level.
THE LAW There isn't one. Use any difficulty or mode you want.
TO QUALIFY: 40
EVIDENCE: A picture of the final results screen for the level in question will be just fine.
POINTS: 30

'SPLITTERS 2

RHYTHM STICK

WE WANT Your fastest time on the challenge 'Hit me baby one morgue time'
THE LAW No laws as such – but it'll probably help if you finish the level.
TO QUALIFY: 2:00
EVIDENCE: A picture of the results screen where it's possible to see what the challenge was will suffice here.
POINTS: 25



When sending us evidence of your achievements, it's useful to follow these here steps...

PHOTOGRAPHS

If you're sending us evidence of the photographic variety:

1. Turn off the camera's flash (or cover it up) to prevent it from reflecting off the screen.
2. Take a tip from Mim and draw the curtains to eradicate sunlight.
3. Use a fast film (200 or 400 ASA).
4. Point at the screen and click away.

PLEASE NOTE: In the past we've had experience of certain scamps 'fiddling' with their photographic evidence, so this time round we're being extra-specially (is that right?) careful. We would, in fact, welcome video evidence over photographic evidence. If, however, you can only send photos, be warned: any doubts over the legality of your entry will lead to instant disqualification, and malicious jeering.

VIDEO

If you're going to be sending us the evidence that comes on a tape, follow the instructions below carefully:

1. Plug the TV lead from the Gamecube into the Signal In socket of your video.
2. Connect the Signal Out socket on your video to your TV.
3. Find a spare channel on the video and search for the signal.
4. After completing and recording the challenge, rewind the tape and send it in. We can't return tapes, sorry.

THE LEADERBOARD

MONTH 3: WHERE ARE YOU NOW?...

1 **Matthew Pellett** Spalding	941.01pts
2 **Phil "PH" Hughes** Cheshire	767.02pts
3 **Bruce Livings** Watford	707.02pts
4 **Rex McGee** Trowbridge	681.01pts
5 **Dave Every** Ellesmere Port	632.02pts
6 **Steve Brooks** Broughton Astley	627.02pts
7 **Dermot Ryan** Mullingar	441.01pts
8 **Michael Rothwell** Wallasey	411.01pts
9 **Andrew Mills** Dundee	397.02pts
10 **Simon Mason** West Parley	396.01pts
11 **Bryan Docherty** Gourock	390pts
12 **Dean Hailstone** Jarrow	367.02pts
13 **Lewis Voigtländer-Ford** Milton Keynes	360pts
14 **Barry Lewis** Dairsie	330pts
15 **Dave "Sphinx" Pugh** Saffron Walden	296.01pts
16 **David Williamson** Bathgate	275pts
17 **Tiarnan Mc Nulty** Co Tyrone	271.01pts
18 **Mr S** Aberdare	260pts
19 **Chris Fletcher** Stockport	255pts
20 **Gareth Brownlow** Kilrea	250pts
21 **Rob Jones** Poole	235pts
22 **Michael Seaward** Stanley	225pts
23 **Andrew McGrae** Southport	220pts
24 **H. Rooney-Nugent** London, **D. McDonald** Warwick	195pts
25 **Andy Whittle** Leigh	191.01pts
26 **Jason Leverett** Great Yarmouth	190pts
27 **Paul Gibb** Cheltenham, **Janne Kaitila** Finland	185pts
28 **Simon Mason** West Parley, **M. Woof** Leamington Spa	165pts
29 **Norman Glover** Cleveland	160pts
30 **Lee Graham** Bristol, **Banjo-Fluff** The Breegul Aviary, **Adam Weston** Ballycranbeg, **Thomas Cox** Birchington, **Daniel Sneddon** Bingley	150pts

Each month, the totals will be totted up and balances displayed in the Big Table™. The top five spots at the end of the season win goodies – Numero Uno gets not only planet-wide admiration/envy in equal measure, but hard material goods. We keep track of every entrant's scores, so you can boost your points each month and move onto or up the list.





ENTRY FORM

Name.....................................

Address.....................................

....

....

.....................................Postcode.....................................

Send to...

I'M THE BEST, **NGC** Magazine,
30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room. Defaced or illegible papers will be disqualified and burned in the furnaces of Hell, *pour encourager les autres.*

F-ZERO GX

- ❑ COSMO TERMINAL.....................
- ❑ AEROPOLIS.....................

SOUL CALIBUR

- ❑ TIME ROTH.....................
- ❑ CHAIN IMPACT.....................

HITMAN 2

- ❑ HAYAMOTO HIT.....................

TIMESPLITTERS 2

- ❑ RHYTHM STICK.....................

SSX3

- ❑ PEAK 2 TRIAL.....................

IKARUGA

- ❑ ROBOT CHALLENGE 3.....................

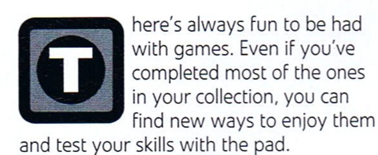
HEY! IT'S THE RETURN OF...

GAME ON!

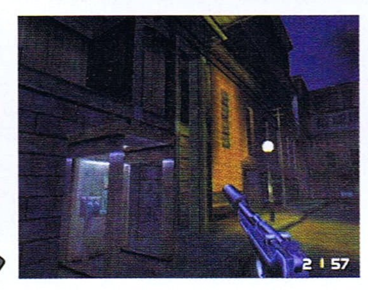


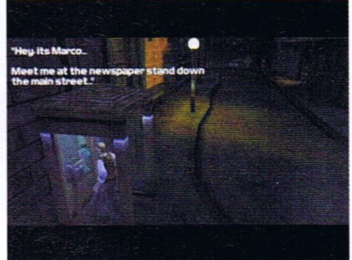
There's always fun to be had with games. Even if you've completed most of the ones in your collection, you can find new ways to enjoy them and test your skills with the pad.

Game On is all about discovering new ways to play old favourites. You might find something in here that'll give you a reason to dust down a title you haven't touched in weeks. Each challenge has targets for gold, silver or bronze medals, as set by its author. Have a crack at any you find interesting, and if you're inspired to create a few of your own then send them to **Game On**, at the usual address, and we'll help you share them with the whole Nintendo-loving world.



TIMESPLITTERS 2







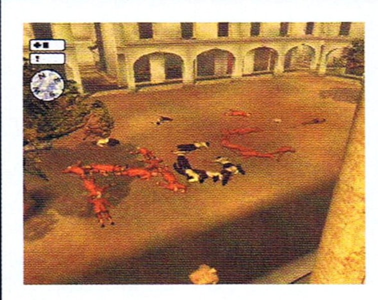
LAMP PUTTING

by **Adam Grindley, Wales**

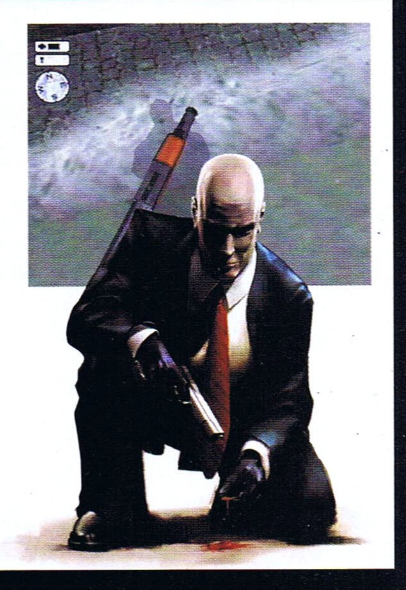
Crazy golf doesn't get much crazier than this – not even Mario can match it! On the Chicago Story mode stage in *TimeSplitters 2* (on the easy difficulty setting, of course!), go through the gates that you need the membership card to get into, and pop into the restaurant part of the building. Walk over to the table in the left corner and 'tee off' by shooting the lamp off the table. The idea is to **shoot the lamp into the telephone booth outside** (turn right after leaving the restaurant). **The fewer shots you take, the better.**

SHOTS  **1-4**  **5**  **6**

HITMAN 2







BECAUSE THE LADY LOVES

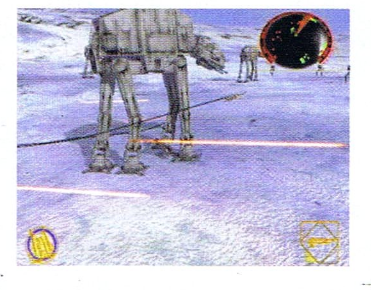
by **Rory Steele, Glastonbury**

It's like the Milk Tray adverts, but with KILLING. Play *Hitman 2*, Invitation to a Party. Kill the German Ambassador (to get the safe combination) and one female party guest (the lady). Then you must **gather as many chocolate boxes as you can from the safes, scoring one point for each box 'delivered' to the lady by dropping it on her corpse**. However, apart from the two waiters (carrying bonus chocolate), no-one else must die. To get gold, you must avoid the guards, gather and deliver all 11 boxes and then escape to your boat.

CHOCCIES DELIVERED  **11**   **9**  **6**



STAR WARS: ROGUE LEADER





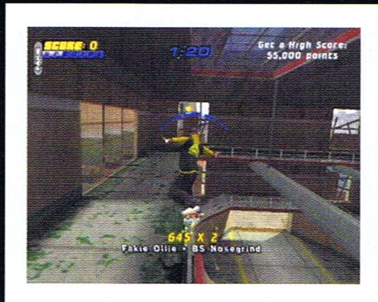
HAVE AT-ST YOU!

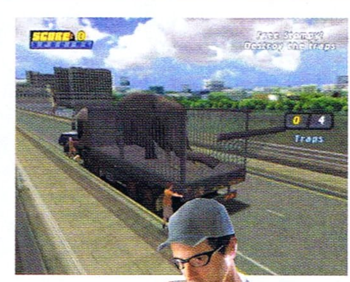
by **Paul Blake, Dublin**

Select the Battle of Hoth level. Make your wing men and the footsoldiers guarding the ion cannon retreat. **Now destroy as many AT-STs as possible by crashing into them!** If this sounds impossible, you can survive crashing into them if they are damaged enough when you hit. You can weaken their health using your lasers but if you destroy one with lasers then that kill doesn't count towards your total. Also, the AT-ST must explode when you hit it or the kill doesn't count either. See how many AT-STs you can destroy using this method, before all three of your lives are lost.

AT-STS  6   4  3

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4





STUCK UP SKATER

by **Gary Butler, Wokingham**

On the Zoo level in *Tony Hawk's 4*, go to the area where the elephants are housed. See the tunnel-like area of the elephant pit? Well, you can do a loop the loop in here. We don't know what's on the floor of the elephant pit, but it must be affecting your wheels because if you stop on the ceiling of the loop you don't fall off! The challenge is to **stay upside down on the ceiling for as long as possible**. It's harder than it sounds. Stop timing when you drop from the top of the loop, not from when you hit the floor.



SECONDS  30  20  10

NGC CHALLENGES WANTED

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN…

Have you discovered a weird and wonderful new way to play Nintendo games? Can you sum it all up in about 100 words? If you have a challenge you'd like to share with other NGC readers, then we want to hear about it. Jot down a quick explanation of what you've got to do on a piece of paper, set three suitable levels of achievement for gold, silver and bronze medals, stick it in an envelope, and send it to…

GAME ON, NGC Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Or email ngc@futurenet.co.uk, with Game On as the subject line.

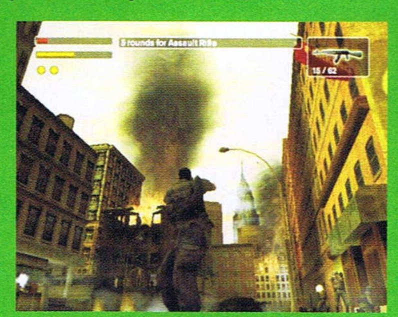
We'll take challenges for absolutely any game on the good ol' 'Cube, but this month we're particularly interested in…



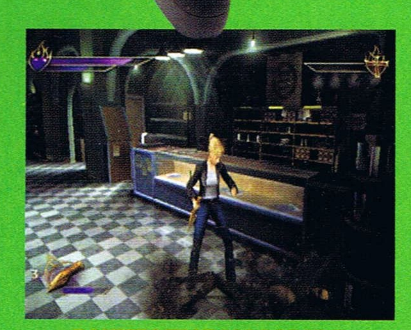
F-ZERO



SOUL CALIBUR 2



FREEDOM FIGHTERS



BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

THE BEST GET PRINTED RIGHT HERE, AND OUR FAVOURITE CHALLENGE WILL WIN A SHINY NEW GAMECUBE GAME. DEAL?

30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW

MAILBOX

EMAIL US!

Got something to say? Run out of stamps? Guards won't let you near a pen? Then log on to the interweb and 'get' us 'at'…

ngc@futurenet.co.uk

… right now! And please include your *name and address.* And a photo. Oh, go on.

STAR LETTER

The winner of the Star Letter receives a bundle of gaming gear courtesy of Joytech, incorporating two Advanced Controllers, a gold-plated RGB Scart cable, an 8Mb memory card and a GC/GBA link cable. Mint!

'Used its thickness'

I'd just like to thank you at **NGC** for making your magazine chock full of gaming news, reviews and previews. Not because I'm completely nuts about your magazine, but because I used its thickness to get my mobile phone from out the back of the radiator where it had fallen. You see, first I crammed the August issue up there, which pushed my phone to about the halfway mark, then I crammed the September issue up to raise the phone even more and retrieve it. Thankfully I have my phone, but now I have two **NGC** magazines stuck behind the radiator to worry about.
Jon Durham, Lydney

Fear not, Jon, for I happen to have spare copies of the issues in question. You can leave your originals wedged where they are, and centuries from now their yellowed pages will be carefully extracted and studied by archaeologists, before being used to free a Space Communicator from the back of a Thermal Convection Unit. Ed

JOYTECH™



'Peeved and furious'

Alright, someone's gonna get it! All (that's right, *all*) of my gaming hard work over the past year has been binned! This is thanks to either Game, for their faulty memory card (which I strangely got free with the console) or more likely the makers of *Burnout 2*, as this happened after about 30 minutes of me playing it, and I had problems with having to constantly retry when saving. What these people have on their hands is a seriously peeved and furious individual and I want answers, now! That memory card had totally completed versions of *Rogue Leader*, *Zelda*, *Mario Sunshine*, and, worst of all, *Super Smash Bros Melee*. That is what sent me over the edge into pure gaming madness!
John Ogilvie, Forres

There's nothing like a memory card disaster to totally harsh your mellow. You should have seen Geraint's face when he accidentally formatted his Japanese card with completed* Soul Calibur 2 *and F-Zero saves on it. Priceless! Ed

'Actually exist'

I'm writing to complain about your criticism of Nintendo's Stars Catalogue. If you cared to do any *real* research, you would have found that in the past they have given away Wavebirds and GBA Platinums, and it was perfectly possible to win any of them.

In addition, I would like to point out that they are in the process of refurbishing the Catalogue to include games, posters, and things that actually exist outside the virtual world. I understand you may not have known this when the mag went to press, due to those strange schedules you lot have, so there you are.
Michael Foster, Fareham

I remember those Wavebirds and GBAs. I was saving my stars until I had enough to get one, only to discover that a mere 50 Wavebirds and 25 GBAs were available. For the whole of Europe! I blame former NGC staffer Mark Green, who now heads up the Nintendo website in Germany and lives in a castle constructed entirely from N64 cartridges. Give me my free Wavebird, Greener, or I'll tell Go-sen exactly what you said about Princess Peach. Ed



△ Real-life gifts! What, no more PDF calendars or JPEG 'T-shirt transfers'? How disappointing.

Bonus Letters

Don't ignore the entertaining sub-quests and just ram through the main adventure, because that would be a crime. And you should be shot for it.
Martijn Heule, Holland
Absolutely. Ed

Small people hang low. Trust me.
Daniel Gray, Dublin
Rubbish. Ed

Sonic went into the docter and said to he's personal Dr. Bolied, Fried or Scrambled.
Keiron Dunnage, 'Danenham'
Good grief. Ed

I can't wait for the day when I kick seven shades of Wah!
Adam Mander, Bristol
Me neither. Ed

Geddit? Turned into a field!
Gordon Buston, Co Limerick
Ah, Irish humour. Ed

If you don't like a band, don't buy their records. If you don't like a movie franchise, you don't have to go see the 27th instalment at the cinema.
Thomas Breckney, Renfrew
Fair point. Ed

'Torturing innocent'

During the summer I came across a series of books about a teenage boy who saves the world, like James Bond Jr but not as cringeworthy. In these novels, the hero, Alex Rider, uses lots of teenage-style gadgets.

The intriguing thing about this is that they're always Game Boys. In the first of the books, Stormbreaker, a Game Boy Color is turned into a fax/photocopier, an x-ray machine, a bug finder and a smoke bomb. In the third book, Skeleton Key, a GBA conceals a geiger counter. But most amusing of all, the fourth book, Eagle Strike, centres around a guy who creates a new games console called the Game Slayer, which digitises the player into the game.

Of course, this is only realised by torturing innocent kids in a real version of the game, with ancient Egyptian gods and the like.
Daniel Rouse, High Wycombe

Are you the author's publicist or something? Ed



HONOURABLE MENTIONS
Thanks to everyone who wrote in this month, including (but not limited to): Michael Fenton, Deans Livingston; Jacob Kirk, Sheffield; Paolo Verdolini, Nottingham; Jonathon Barlow, Wrexham; Big J, Wales; Paul Davison, Sedgefield; Daniel Brady, Croydon; Chris Fletcher, Marple; Ross Stevenson, Cornwall; Nathan Brown, Norwich; Tom Walters, via email; Jason Leeming, Darwen; Chris Ryan, Liverpool; Stephen Arthur, Newcastle; Pete Warbis, Dorset; Robert Reid, via email; Tom Laverack, Crowthorne; Bram Speeckaert, Belgium; Ben Lander, Teddington; Jamie McGookin, West Kilbride; Richard Clements, Dearham; Conall Wilkinson, via email; Dan Perren,

Memory card disasters, mobile madness and the Stars Shatalogue

'Into dust'

I have to point out that no matter how much you love a game, it will eventually break or get thrashed so much it won't ever work again. It only really lives on in our memory. Even though the data and discs will probably outlast us, they will eventually disintegrate into dust. Which is a shame really, don't you think?
Josiah Mainwaring, Mynydd Isa

We're all going to get obliterated by a giant asteroid. How's that for depressing? Ed

'There, mind, because'

Here's 'Mario' advertising a Dutch cafeteria. Don't all rush there, mind, because the Mario from the cafe is not exactly Super. In fact, he is a lazy bum.
Henrie van Meurs, Holland



He looks like he's covered in chip grease, too. Ed

'Half naked'

A few years ago you published a picture of a reader in a location reminiscent of Gerudo Fortress in *Ocarina of Time*. While on holiday in Spain I came across this play area in a water park that I thought looked like a scaled down version of Ricco Harbour from *Super Mario Sunshine*. I had a photo of me in front of it, but as I'm half naked, I thought it would be best for Geraint's self-esteem if I didn't send it in.
Mark Cookney, Blackpool

You've just made him curious now. Anybody else visited a Nintendo location while prancing around in Speedos? Ed



Bonus Letters

I looked up 'mature' in the dictionary. It says, among other things, 'ripe, completely developed'.
Steve Collier, via email
Yes, cheesehead. Ed

You even seem proud of yourselves for reaching subchapter three and for punching out the lights of girls and fat man.
Adam Lindley, Guildford
Naturally. Ed

Kirby was a steaming pile of monkey droppings.
Paul Beveridge, Co Durham
Well… Ed

People like him deserve a slap.
Ben Smith, Wiltshire
Too right. Ed

I must say this has frustrated me and I am dismayed.
Rhys Simons, via email
How annoying. Ed

You seriously need more mailbox space. It's by far the most interesting part of the whole mag.
Miko Rumsby, Alton
And that's the double truth, Ruth. Ed

'Sickened me'

And then there was Kirby. How could you give a highly anticipated game 51%? It sickened me even more to see EndGC. Just because you hate Kirby gives you no right to give his game a worse score than *Spy Hunter*, which is a bad game. If you liked Kirby, I'm sure *Air Ride* would have got 80%.
Jack Taylor, Driffield

That one did cause a fair bit of debate as to exactly how poor it was, but there's no denying its mediocrity. We're as disappointed as anyone that Air Ride turned out to be a bit of a turkey, but for everybody who'd rather we gave highly anticipated games huge scores just for the hell of it, here's a feelgood rating for you to cut out and stick over the real one.* Ed



*Get a grown-up's permission before playing with scissors.

'Promote women'

I flick through a Nintendo magazine, I see a GBA SP advert. I flick through a Formula 1 magazine, I see a GBA SP advert. I flick through FHM, I see a GBA SP advert.

Nintendo seem to be marketing the Game Boy well, and perhaps this is why it's selling so much better than Gamecube. Nintendo have a lot of confidence in their handheld and it seems the whole GC-GBA connectivity thing is just an excuse for Nintendo to include the Gamecube in their GBA SP adverts sometime in the future.

Now how on earth are the Sony marketing guys going to come back from that one? People reading those types of magazine will say, 'Hey those two consoles promote woman in lingerie! I'm getting them!' If Nintendo really want to sell their consoles they should give away free booze or a free lads' mag with every cube.
Matthew Wheavil, via email

Do your friends call you Wheavil Knievel? Ed

'Unsociable solo'

Why is there so much fuss about online gaming? I remember when the NES first came out and parents were concerned about gaming being unsociable. However, they soon changed their tune with the SNES (four-player *Bomberman* and *Super Tennis*) and N64 (*Mario Kart* and *GoldenEye*).

Nowadays we enjoy nothing better than getting together with a load of beers and the Gamecube. With titles like *Smash Bros*, *TimeSplitters 2*, *Monkey Ball* and *Mario Party*, we forget time until the sun comes up to remind us. And it's hard to express our excitement over eight-player *Mario Kart* – bring it on! Anyway, my point is that gaming has become a huge social event. Online play,



CORRECTION CORNER

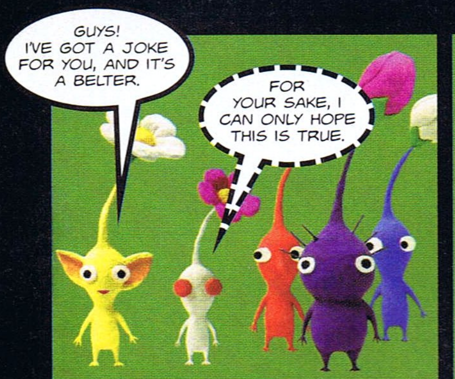
I was shocked at the number of mistakes in issue 85. Now I'm sure other people will point out lots of them, and I personally can't be bothered to go through the magazine again trying to find some. So I will simply show you one mistake. It occurs on page 46, in the *TimeSplitters 2* section. Some art monkey decided that he liked the game so much he needed to dump several images on the page. Unfortunately he placed two on top of each other. This sort of simple mistake needs to be sorted or the magazine will go downhill dramatically.
David Dolling, York

Our art monkey loves it! Ed

via email; David Yarrow, Oxfordshire; Stephen Arthur, via email; Ben Quinn, Wallasey; Arthur Serck, via email; Sam Rose, via email; George Sarell, Derby; Eskil Vestre, Norway (we'll print your holiday photos next month); De Mario Man, Holland; Simon Flynn, Reading; Simon Andrews, Northampton; Samantha Reid, Manchester; Iain Richmond, Brazil; Mark James, London; Andrew Jorgensen, Australia; Jon Staddon, via email; Yaseed Chaumoo, via email; Lee Machin, via email; Alex McLuckie, London; Neil Gates, Brighton; Robert Bryant, Norfolk; Andrew Simpson, Newcastle; David Albright, via email; Jenny Perry, via email; Michael Morrison, London; and everyone else who wrote to us this month. Keep those letters coming, folks.

GriNtendo!

DO YOU HAVE A NINTENDO-RELATED JOKE TO TELL US? YOU DO? GREAT! SEND IT IN AND WE MIGHT JUST PRINT IT HERE, BUT IF YOU DON'T MAKE IT DAMN FUNNY, THE PIKMIN DIES. MAKE US LAUGH AND YOU WIN A GAME. ***THIS MONTH:*** 'JOKE' SUPPLIED BY BENT SUMELIUS.









however, is in danger of reversing this and turning gaming back into an unsociable, solo effort. Where's the fun in thrashing somebody and not being able to taunt them to their face, or getting everyone to gang up on the smartarse with the huge kill count in *TS2*? Nintendo, I feel, have got it right again with LAN multiplayer games. Get more mates in, and enjoy the experience.
Barry Lewis, Fife

Typing insults to faceless opponents or having strangers chatter in your ears through a robot voice filter make poor substitutes for an actual social life. But then again, some of us have no friends. Sob… Ed

'Treating us'

It's great that *Mario Kart* is being released in Europe at the same time as the US. At last Nintendo are treating us the same. No doubt they think they are doing a great job and yes, in this instance they are. Well done Nintendo.

But why release it within two weeks of *F-Zero*? Why put two of your biggest titles head to head? I'm okay, I've already imported *F-Zero*, but for many people it will be a case of one game or the other, as money is tight in the run up to Christmas. There's a chance that both games will ultimately not be as big a success in the marketplace as they deserve to be.
David Halliday, Shipley

At the time of writing,* Mario Kart *is due over here before it hit the US. That's such good news, I'm going to sign up for medical research and get myself injected with ebola viruses, just so I can afford both games. Ed

'Every belief'

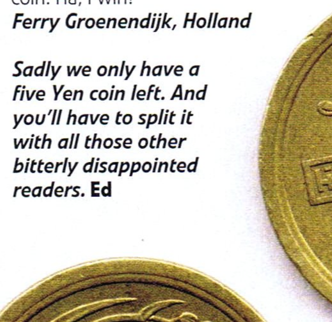
You'll probably kill me for saying this, but here goes – I think Nintendo should delay *Mario Kart*. The reason? Prelims. *Mario Kart* comes out at the same time as the Scottish prelims. so I won't be getting it. Not right away, anyhow. Why can't they just delay it a month or so? It kills every belief I have to say this, but my exams will have to come before games.
Mark Nisbet, Galston

It's easy enough to combine games with education. I played the original* Mario Kart *obsessively throughout my time at university, and still passed my exams. Of course, when I say 'passed', I mean 'scraped through with the lowest possible grade'. But more importantly, I'm a demon at Rainbow Road time trials. Ed

'Owe me a shiny'

Back in issue 1 you made a wager with me. You said, and I quote: 'Nintendo haven't yet said whether *Mother 3* will be heading westwards, but we'll bet a ¥100 coin on it'. I distinctly remember saying to your magazine: 'I accept your bet!'. Obviously *Mother 3* never come out in the West, or anywhere else for that matter, so it looks like you owe me a shiny 100 Yen coin. Ha, I win!
Ferry Groenendijk, Holland

Sadly we only have a five Yen coin left. And you'll have to split it with all those other bitterly disappointed readers. Ed



SO TELL ME THIS...

Massive amounts of thinks and learns, courtesy of The Brain.

1. Got a release date for *XIII*?
2. If I import the special Hori *Soul Calibur II* Arcade Stick, will it work on my PAL Gamecube?
3. In your humble opinion, is *Soul Calibur II* better than *Street Fighter Alpha 3*?

Edward Evans, London

1. November 14th.
2. Yes.
3. Definitely.

1. As *GTA* is going to appear on Xbox later this year, does this mean it may also be released for Gamecube?
2. Are there any computer game events like E3 or ECTS that aren't trade only?
3. Is there any chance of Nintendo doing a game like *Gran Turismo*, because the Gamecube is seriously lacking a good racing game.

Steve Furness, via email

1. No.
2. Not any really good ones.
***3. It's hardly Nintendo's style. Anyway, racing games don't get much better than* F-Zero.**

1. Will *Tales of Symphonia* come out in Europe and if so, when, 'cos I really want it.
2. How come *Kirby's Air Ride* has LAN but *F-Zero GX* doesn't?
3. Is there going to be a sequel to *Skies of Arcadia*?
4. When is Mario going to lose weight?

James Smith, via email

1. There's no confirmed date yet, but the fact that it's getting an English translation for the US release next April means a UK version is a strong possibility. As soon as we know anything we'll print it in the mag.
2. Because Sega's team wasn't interested in including LAN support.
3. There's nothing planned at the moment.
4. When Peach sews his lips together.

1. Would I need permission to make an **NGC** fan club website using Geocities, etc.?
2. Do you think that Nintendo will make another *Zelda* that isn't cel-shaded?

Lee Still, Uxbridge

1. Of course not. We'd be honoured if you did.
2. Yes, but you probably won't see it on Gamecube.

1. When is *Rebel Strike* actually coming out in Europe?
2. I've been hearing rumours about a *Pokémon Emerald* GBA game, is this true?
3. Is the modem for the Gamecube out, because none of the games shops in my town have any?
4. Can you tell me of any cool rare weapons in *PSO* that a HUcast can use?

Jonathan Hawker, Kendal

1. November 7th. Not long to go now…
2. It's very likely. Now try guessing which stones they'll name the rest of the games after. Diamond, Blue John…
3. It was released at the same time as* PSO. *Try online shops or mail order.
4. The J-Sword is a good one.



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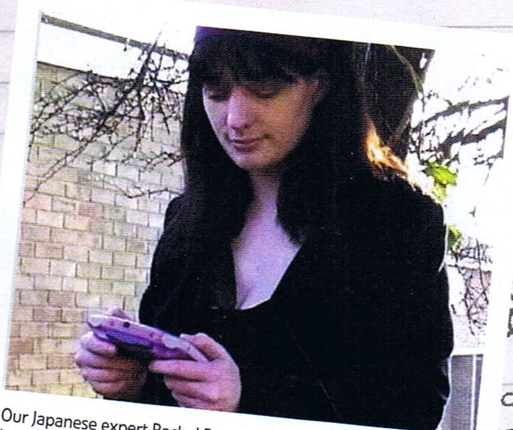



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LEARNING JAPANESE

How to get ahead in the crazy world of Japanese RPGs and stuff like that…

Ever heard an anime freak proudly refer to himself as an 'otaku' because of his unparalleled knowledge of Neo Genesis Evangelion and his potentially illegal collection of Japanese schoolgirl trading cards? Let him know that to a Japanese person the word evokes images of a spotty, greasy loser with skin the colour of his wallpaper, who hasn't seen real daylight in years. That'll teach him.



Our Japanese expert Rachel Ryan, pictured in her natural Essex habitat. She was last spotted at the Tokyo Games Show, stocking up on pink GBAs and black leather goth gear.

VIDEOGAMES SAY THE FUNNIEST THINGS…

Kana: セーノ！
Reading: **SE I NO!**

Meaning: A precursor to a game or any situation where everyone has to act at the same time, this is the Japanese for 'Ready, Go!' although you will often hear the English words spoken instead, in odd (to English-speaking ears) Japanese accents.

Kana: まだまだ
Reading: **MA DA MA DA**

Meaning: A taunt before battle, the meaning of this is subtle. It literally means 'Still, still' but the implication is 'It's not over yet, but it soon will be!'

Kanji: 負けないぞ！
Kana: まけないぞ！
Reading: **MAKENAI ZO!**

Meaning: Another pre-battle taunt, usually when the speaker is a little more unsure of himself. This one literally means 'I won't be defeated!'

Kanji: 勝ちだ！
Kana: かちだ！
Reading: **KA CHI DA!**

Meaning: Literally, 'I win!' Not something you want to hear your opponent crowing.

Kanji: 四天王
Kana: してんのう
Reading: **SHI TE N NOU**

Meaning: This is extremely common, and the source of much unoriginality in games and anime. The Shitennou were the four heavenly kings of legend – the three characters literally mean 'Four, Heaven, King'. This overused piece of oriental legend usually crops up in the form of four elemental mini-bosses, all of whom you must fight, then kill, then perhaps kill a SECOND time when they rise in a new form to summon the final boss.

Kanji: 白虎、青竜、朱雀、玄武
Kana: びゃっこ、せいりゅう すざく、げんぶ
Reading: **BYAK KOU, SE I RYUU SU ZA KU, GEN BU**

Meaning: Again, a piece of oriental legend that crops up in games. Byakko is the white tiger, Seiryuu, the blue dragon, Suzaku, the red bird, and Genbu, the green turtle. These are the four Chinese animal guardians of heaven. Look out for them as mini-bosses, summonable spells and, in the case of *PSO*, a collectable set of shields.

Kana: どく、まひ、こおり こんらん
Reading: **DO KU, MA HI, KO O RI, KON RAN**

Meaning: These are the four most common status elements in RPGs, meaning poisoned, paralysed, frozen and confused respectively. You'll come across these loads.

Kanji: 世界一、日本一
Kana: せかいいち にほんいち
Reading: **SE KA I I CHI, NI HO N I CHI**

Meaning: Two common claims bragging characters often make in beat-'em-ups. The final kanji in each simply means 'one', and combined with the other two words mean 'Number one in the world', and 'Number one in Japan' respectively.

日本一 in particular is usually worn as a slogan across a bandanna, by brash, conceited and (usually) comic relief characters.

Kana: おたく、マニア
Reading: **O TA KU, MA NI A**

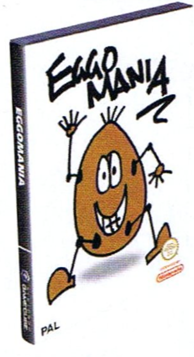
Meaning: Two words for a fan (of ANY popular product), the former being extremely common as an adopted word for an anime obsessive in the West, which is viewed as a badge of pride. This runs totally converse to the Japanese meaning which implies that you are a complete loser.

Otaku means 'Your house', but it is also an honorific word for 'you', when addressing a stranger. So effectively, an otaku is 'One who stays at home and has no friends'.

'Mania' (pronounced mannia in Japanese) is a far more common word in Japan, despite the negative connotation in the west.

THE EVOLUTION OF…

EGGS

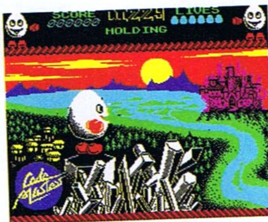


Delving through the videogame archives to find out why one egg is never un oeuf…

1 JOUST
Space knights astride giant chickens compete to claw each other's heads off, thereby releasing the vanquished foe's essence as a large egg. An early example of a game which included inertia, as well as one of the eggiest things in early '80s arcades.
Egg cuisine: Ostrich egg omelette

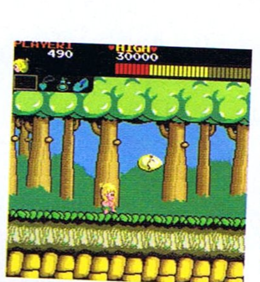
2 CHUCKIE EGG
Inexplicably popular Donkey Kong rip-off in which a fat yellow man climbs ladders and leaps over chasms in search of the illicit pleasures of stolen bird eggs. Once found, he pierces holes in the ends of the egg, before blowing the contents all over the distressed parents' nest.
Egg cuisine: Chinese fermented duck eggs.

3 DIZZY
White-shelled hero from a fledgling Codemasters company, released for the bargain price of £1.99.



Dizzy aimed to become the hero of the 'yolkfolk' by finding lost treasure in forbidden tombs, or some such nonsense. Dizzy and his twin brother now star in the Tomb Raider games, fact fans.
Egg cuisine: Egg salad.

4 WONDER BOY



Sega's uncompromising, semi-clothed prehistoric lad fought giant snails and leapfrogged deadly piles of pebbles using tomahawks and skateboards found within large dinosaur eggs, which he smashed open with his bare feet.
Egg cuisine: Kedgeree.

5 SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
As Dr Robotnik, Sonic's rotund nemesis has a name eminently suitable for a psychotic scientist with designs on world domination. But he's also known as Eggman, which sounds like the kind of name his old college drinking buddies gave him after a particularly embarrassing night on the tiles.
Egg cuisine: Hollandaise.



6 YOSHI'S ISLAND
Yoshi's incredibly efficient digestive system can absorb the raw materials of monkeys and other forest creatures and excrete them as shiny, colourful eggs in a mere fraction of a second. A biological improbability and horrible cruelty to monkeys combined.
Egg cuisine: Egg Foo Yung (number 17).



7 POKÉMON GOLD & SILVER
After years of relieving kids of their pocket money, Nintendo decided to give something back by becoming educators. Introduce two likely monsters and they'll breed! But how?
Egg cuisine: Scrambled.



8 EGGO MANIA
Egg-based puzzle game that bored us so much we felt compelled to design our own box art when we reviewed it. See above. Notable only for its rich, sulphur-laden aroma.
Egg cuisine: Powdered egg.



NGC TOP10

WEAPONS WE HAVEN'T FOUND YET IN WORMS 3D



1. **SIEGFRIED & ROY'S TIGER** Sits around looking pretty, then chews out its owner's scrawny throat to great applause.
2. **ROD HULL'S TV AERIAL** Tempts the unwary with promises of football, then starts blowing a gale.
3. **EXPIRED BOTULINUM** Waits for ten years inside a scientist's fridge, behind the mango chutney. Harmless.
4. **PREMIERSHIP FOOTBALLERS** We really are walking on dodgy ground now. But anyway, *[censored censored censored]*.
5. **GO-SEN'S DEATH BY WHIRRING METAL BLADES™** Says it all, really.
6. **FROSTY JACK'S FROSTY FROST** Winter on the streets, warmed (to death) by toxic chemicals.
7. **BLAINE BOX** Imprison your worm in perspex, with only a nutritious soup to sustain him, then taunt him with eggs and bared arses.
8. **THE RARE RELEASE LIST** A financially crippling lack of activity, resulting in your worm being fired and made homeless.
9. **JUICE BOY** A horrible kid who pulls their heads off (sshlup), sucks the juice out, throws the skins away. Not popular at school.
10. **THE BAIT** The worm sticks his victim on a hook, then goes fishing. Simple and tranquil. What a way to go.

THE RETURN OF THE KING!

JUST CALL ME ELVISH! UH-HUH! THANKYA VERY MUCH...







MOUNTAIN'S GONNA GETCHA

"Shows the young upstarts how a snowboarding game should really be done." GAMES TM

